

What is Diabetes?

Insulin is a hormone and is made by an organ near the stomach called the pancreas (PAN-kree-us). Insulin helps the body use sugar from the blood for energy. Diabetes is a disease where the body fails to produce insulin, called Type 1, or stops properly using the insulin it produces, called Type 2. Some common symptoms of diabetes are blurred vision, unusual or increased tiredness, irregular weight loss, increased irritability, increased thirst, and intense hunger.

Tests that you could be asked to take if you have diabetes

Once again, there are a few tests available, so developing a relationship with your doctor and asking questions about the right test for you is important.

Here are some of the tests:

- The Fasting Plasma Glucose Test (FPG): you go a minimum of 8 hours without eating, and then your blood glucose level is tested. Any level 99 or below is normal, 100 to 125 means a form of pre-diabetes and a risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, and anything above 126 means you have diabetes.
- The Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT): you go a minimum of 8 hours without eating and then your blood glucose level is measured. Two hours after you drink a glucose-containing beverage, it is remeasured. If the second tests report results between 140 and 199, you have pre-diabetes and you have a high risk of getting Type 2 diabetes. If the first results are above 200 and are confirmed by the second tests, you have diabetes.



- The Random Plasma Glucose Test: your blood glucose level is measured regardless of when you ate your last meal. A test result of over 200 means you have diabetes. This test is less accurate than the others.

- The A1C (Glycated Hemoglobin) Test: This is a blood test that gives your doctor an idea of what your average blood sugar values have been over the last 3 months. The result is given in a percentage value (%). The range found in healthy persons is about 4 - 5.9%. Those with diabetes should have glucose levels in or close to that range. An increase in your glucose percentage to 7% or higher can put you at risk for other related diseases like CAD or a heart attack.