

Type 2 diabetes changes: How and why

What happens in type 2 diabetes?

When you have type 2 diabetes:

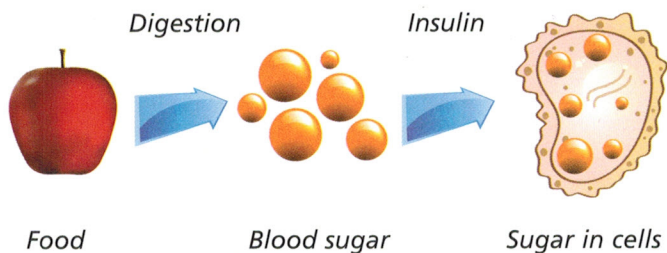
- Your pancreas makes little or no insulin, or
- Your body prevents the insulin you do make from working right

As a result, sugar can't get into your cells. So it stays in your blood. That's why your blood sugar gets too high (also called hyperglycemia).

Understanding type 2 diabetes

Insulin, sugar, and your cells

When you eat, some of your food is broken down into sugar (also called glucose). Sugar travels in your blood to all your body's cells. Insulin helps sugar move from your blood into your cells. Insulin is a hormone that is made by the beta cells in your pancreas. Another hormone, GLP-1, helps the beta cells release the right amount of insulin.



Your cells need sugar for energy. Sugar from food makes your blood sugar level go up. Insulin lowers your blood sugar level by helping sugar move from your blood into your cells.

Why does it change over time?

Diabetes changes over time because of changes that take place in the body. In people with type 2 diabetes:

- The beta cells, which make insulin, stop working and start to die off (In fact, most people with type 2 diabetes have already lost half of their beta cell function by the time they are diagnosed)
- As the number of beta cells goes down, the pancreas makes less and less insulin

Several other things may also happen over time:

- The insulin that is made by the pancreas is not used efficiently by the cells in the body
- The beta cells need to make much more insulin than is made normally
- GLP-1 stops working normally and not enough insulin is made by the pancreas

Because of these changes, your blood sugar can stay too high. This can increase your risk for other health problems. **But by following your diabetes care plan, you can do a lot to prevent these problems or slow them down.**

What can you do?

As type 2 diabetes changes over time, following your meal plan and staying active often are not enough to keep your blood sugar in check. Medicine is almost always necessary. The good news is that there are effective medicines to treat all stages of type 2 diabetes. Talk with your diabetes care team about the best treatment for you.