

## WHAT IS DIABETES?

### *Diabetes*

A condition in which the body is not able to produce enough insulin to keep the blood glucose levels within normal range. *Insulin* is a hormone made by an organ called the pancreas. Insulin is important because it allows the body to use glucose for energy. Blood glucose levels rise if there is not enough insulin, or the body cannot use it properly. Symptoms of high blood glucose are unusual thirst, frequent urination, blurred vision, weight loss, and fatigue.

### *Type 1 Diabetes*

Occurs when the insulin producing cells of the pancreas are destroyed by the body's immune system. Antibodies are a marker of this autoimmune destruction. A person with type 1 diabetes must inject insulin regularly in order for their body to use glucose properly. Blood glucose levels must be monitored frequently in order to adjust insulin doses to keep blood glucose levels in range.

### *Type 2 Diabetes*

Occurs when a person makes insulin but not enough insulin for the body's need and the body does not respond properly to insulin (which is called insulin resistance). Being overweight or having a family history of type 2 diabetes are risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes may be controlled by weight loss, exercise, and meal planning. Oral diabetes medications and/or insulin may also be used to control blood glucose levels.

### *Pre-Diabetes*

Indicates a risk for developing diabetes when the blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet in a diabetes range. Pre-diabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes, but it may also be prevented through weight management, meal planning, and regular exercise. Risk factors for developing pre-diabetes include family history, ethnicity, being overweight, poor diet/exercise habits, or a previous diagnosis of gestational diabetes.

### *Gestational Diabetes*

Occurs during pregnancy due to hormone changes that cause an increase demand for insulin. In some women, the pancreas is unable to keep up with increased insulin demands and the cells become resistant to insulin. The glucose levels must be kept in tight control during pregnancy to reduce risks to the mother and developing baby. Gestational diabetes is controlled by meal planning, frequent blood glucose monitoring, and medication.

### *Steroid Induced Diabetes*

Caused by steroids that make blood glucose levels rise. Steroids are a group of medications commonly used in the treatment of many medical conditions. Steroids can alter the body's ability to use glucose properly and cause insulin resistance similar to those with type 2 diabetes. Steroid induced diabetes may be managed through diet, oral medication, and/or insulin. Steroid induced diabetes usually resolves when the steroids are stopped.