

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood sugar is too high. Another term for blood sugar is blood glucose. Blood glucose is your main source of energy and comes from food intake. Glucose stays in your blood and doesn't reach your cells if your body doesn't make enough insulin or any insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is made by your pancreas that helps glucose get into your cells to be used for energy. Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause health problems such as:

- heart disease
- stroke
- kidney disease
- eye problems
- dental disease
- nerve damage
- foot problems

The most common types of diabetes are type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes

Your body does not make insulin when you have type 1 diabetes. Your immune system attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, although it can appear at any age. People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin every day.

Type 2 diabetes

The most common type is Type 2 diabetes. Your body does not make or use insulin well when you have type 2 diabetes. You can develop type 2 diabetes at any age, even during childhood. However, this type of diabetes occurs most often in middle-aged and older people.

Gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes can develop in some women during pregnancy. Most of the time, this type of diabetes goes away after the baby is born. However, if you've had gestational diabetes, you have a greater chance of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Other types of diabetes

Less common types include monogenic diabetes, which is an inherited form of diabetes, and cystic fibrosis-related diabetes.

According to the National Diabetes Statistics Report of 2020 from the Center of Disease Control:

Diabetes

- Total: 34.2 million people have diabetes (10.5% of the US population)
- Diagnosed: 26.9 million people, including 26.8 million adults
- Undiagnosed: 7.3 million people (21.4% are undiagnosed)

Prediabetes

- Total: 88 million people aged 18 years or older have prediabetes (34.5% of the adult US population)
- 65 years or older: 24.2 million people aged 65 years or older have prediabetes

Diabetes has no cure, but there are action steps that you can take to manage your health or help others. There are certain factors that put a person at greater risk to develop type 2 diabetes: if you are age 45 or older, have a family history of diabetes, or are overweight. Also, physical inactivity, race, and certain health problems such as high blood pressure affect your chance of developing type 2 diabetes.

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes>

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/statistics-report/index.html>



Prevent Diabetes

Keep diabetes prevention basic by eating more healthy, becoming more physically active and losing a few extra pounds. Making a few simple changes in your lifestyle now may help you avoid the serious health complications of diabetes in the future, such as nerve, kidney and heart damage. Consider these diabetes prevention tips from the American Diabetes Association.

Get more physical activity

Exercise can help you:

- Lose weight
- Lower your blood sugar
- Boost your sensitivity to insulin — which helps keep your blood sugar within a normal range

Research shows that aerobic exercise and resistance training can help control diabetes. The greatest benefit comes from a fitness program that includes both.

Get plenty of fiber

- Reduce your risk of diabetes by improving your blood sugar control
- Lower your risk of heart disease
- Promote weight loss by helping you feel full

Foods high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains and nuts.

Go for whole grains

Try to make at least half your grains whole grains. Look for the word “whole” on the package and among the first few items in the ingredient list.

Lose extra weight

If you're overweight, diabetes prevention may hinge on weight loss. Every pound you lose can improve your health, and you may be surprised by how much. Participants in one large study who lost a modest amount of weight, around 7 percent of initial body weight and exercised regularly, reduced the risk of developing diabetes by almost 60 percent.



Skip fad diets and make healthier choices

Instead, make variety and portion control part of your healthy-eating plan. Focus on choosing three meals/ day of 3-5 food groups balancing the food groups on the plate. Drink water for hydration and limit beverages with excess carbohydrates and sugar, i.e. regular soda, juice, sweetened teas and coffee, flavored waters and energy drinks. Be wary of other empty calories, i.e. chips, desserts, fried foods and excess fats.





Diabetes Awareness Challenge

Diabetes affects over 30 million people—and that number is growing every day. Whether you take action for yourself or a loved one, anything can help. Challenge yourself to take action on one of the below:

- Take a risk test to see if you are at risk for diabetes
- Get a blood sugar, A1C test or a health screening at your local clinic
- Cook healthy recipes from scratch
- Engage in physical activity almost every day
- Become an advocate for diabetes awareness by joining campaigns in your local area
- Volunteer your time or donate to fight against the growing epidemic

<https://www.diabetes.org/community/american-diabetes-month>



Ascension



Superfood of the Month: Pomegranate

What is it?

The pomegranate is a fruit-bearing shrub. The pomegranate is rich in symbolic and mythological associations in many cultures.

Why should I eat them?

Pomegranates are low in calories and fat but high in fiber, vitamins and minerals. Benefits include antioxidants, heart health, urinary health, exercise endurance and more.

What do I do with them?

Although the white, pithy part of the pomegranate is safe to eat, it is bitter and most people prefer to just eat the seeds. There are many ways to enjoy them. Toss them into a green or fruit salad. Sprinkle them onto your yogurt or oatmeal. Add them to smoothies or juices. They are also a tangy garnish on avocado toast.

Tips for buying and storing

When you see pomegranates in the store, they're ripe and ready to eat. Select pomegranates that feel heavy for their size (the heavier the fruit, the juicier it will be) with firm, blemish-free skin.



Eggplant, Pistachio, and Pomegranate Pizza

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 recipe Basic Pizza Dough, or 3/4-pound store-bought dough
- 1 to 2 small eggplants, thinly sliced lengthwise into 6 strips
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Coarse salt
- Red-pepper flakes
- ½ cup salted pistachios, chopped
- ⅓ cup crumbled feta
- ⅓ cup pomegranate seeds (from 1 pomegranate)
- ¼ cup lightly packed cilantro leaves

PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 475 degrees. Form dough (as directed in Basic Pizza Dough recipe) in a 9-by-13-inch rimmed baking sheet. Arrange eggplant lengthwise on dough, 3 slices side-by-side on top half, 3 on bottom half; press into dough. Drizzle with oil, and sprinkle with salt and red-pepper flakes.
2. Bake until cooked through and crust is golden on edges and bottom, about 18 minutes.
3. Using a metal spatula, slide pie onto a cutting board. Sprinkle with pistachios, feta, pomegranate seeds, and cilantro. Slice into 6 pieces and serve.