

Reducing your risk of type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes happens when there is too much sugar (glucose) in the blood for a long time. This can cause problems for the heart, eyes, and other parts of the body.

People from South Asian communities have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes but the risk can be reduced. Small changes in your lifestyle can make a big difference.



Healthy eating: foods that keep your sugar levels steady

- Choose long grain rice like basmati, whole grain options like multigrain bread, wholewheat roti, lentils and chickpeas. These are healthy carbohydrate foods and digest slowly, giving a steady sugar release.
- Limit sweet foods like gulab jamun, paayasam/kheer and jalebi and fried foods like samosas and pakoras. These foods cause sugar levels to spike.
- Add a variety of vegetables and salad to your meals. Fill half your plate with them.
- Drink mainly water. Juice and sugary drinks cause sugar levels to spike.
- Eat meals at regular intervals and avoid eating 2-3 hours before bed.

Keep moving: physical activity helps manage sugar levels

- Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Go for a 10-minute walk after each meal or take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Find an activity you enjoy like dancing to your favourite music, swimming, or playing a sport and make physical activity fun.
- Get active with your friends and family.

Make small manageable changes: take control of your health

- Start with one new habit and build from there.
- If you have a family history of diabetes, get regular health checks to catch early signs.
- Talk to your health professional for more advice to reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes.

What happens in type 2 diabetes

When we eat carbohydrate foods, the body turns them into a type of sugar called glucose. Glucose gives us energy. A hormone called insulin helps move the glucose from our blood into the muscles and other parts of our body, where it is used for energy.

In type 2 diabetes, the body does not use insulin properly or does not make enough insulin. This means the sugar stays in the blood. In the long term, high blood sugar can cause health problems.

Eating a lot of carbohydrate foods in one meal causes sugar in the blood to spike.

Insulin has to work too hard to remove the sugar.

Foods that are high in saturated fat include ghee, butter, fried foods, fatty meats and sweets.

Small amounts of physical activity across the day add up.

Physical activity helps insulin take sugar from the blood into the muscles for energy.

Saturated fat makes it difficult to use insulin properly.

Fruit contains fibre and is a healthy carbohydrate. Eat two serves of fruit each day.

Examples of one serve of fruit are one banana, one apple, ½ cup of grapes, one to two slices of watermelon.

Eating healthy foods, avoiding too many sweet and fried foods, and staying active can help the body use insulin better and keep us healthy.

The **Get Healthy Service** offers free telephone and online health coaching from qualified health professionals to make healthy lifestyle changes and reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes. Register online using the QR code or call **1300 806 258**.

For free and confidential language support, contact Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **131 450** and ask for the **Get Healthy Service** on **1300 806 258**.

