

## What we do

The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association works towards diabetes-free healthy communities. To achieve this vision we work with people, communities and organizations to:

- Raise awareness about diabetes and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada
- Advocate for programs and services for the prevention of type 2 and gestational diabetes among First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples
- Advocate for programs and services for diabetes management for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples living with diabetes
- Promote healthy lifestyles to prevent the onset or complications of diabetes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples

## NADA.CA

Please visit our website to see our bi-monthly newsletters, find numerous community and organizational resources, check our calendar/events page, information about upcoming webinars, learn more about NADA, or get involved.

NADA has an agenda for change through wholistic activities that will make a difference for Aboriginal Peoples affected by diabetes.

## Our Vision

The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association envisions diabetes-free healthy communities.

## Our Mission

The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association's mission is to lead the promotion of healthy environments to prevent and manage diabetes by working together with people, communities and organizations.

## Our Values

- **Aboriginal Communities & Families** are at the front and centre of what we do in connecting with people and communities
- **Respect** of diversity, culture and traditional knowledge of people and communities
- **Honour and Validation** of experiences, wisdom, history, knowledge and cultural differences in building relationships
- **Caring and Sharing** in how we approach people, families and communities in our work
- **Integrity** in the way we strive for excellence and quality in the work that we do
- **Unity** in representing the best interests of people and communities



National  
Aboriginal  
Diabetes  
Association

Association  
Nationale  
Autochtone  
du  
Diabète

103 - 90 GARRY STREET  
WINNIPEG MANITOBA  
R3C 4H1  
1-877-232-6232  
NADA.CA



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[www.nada.ca](http://www.nada.ca)

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which your body cannot properly use and store food for energy. The fuel that your body needs is called glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose comes from foods such as fruit, milk, some vegetables, starchy foods and sugar.

To control your blood glucose you will need to eat healthy foods, be active and you may need to take pills and/or insulin.<sup>1</sup>

## Types of diabetes

**Type 1 diabetes** occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks and kills the beta cells of the pancreas. As a result, sugar builds up in the blood instead of being used as energy. Type 1 diabetes generally develops in childhood or adolescence, but can develop in adulthood. Type 1 diabetes is always treated with insulin. **Meal planning** also helps with keeping blood sugar at the right levels.

**Type 2 diabetes** occurs when the body can't properly use the insulin that is released (called insulin insensitivity) or does not make enough insulin. As a result, sugar builds up in the

blood instead of being used as energy. Type 2 diabetes more often develops in adults, but children can be affected.

**Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes observed in First Nations communities.**<sup>2</sup>

Depending on the severity of type 2 diabetes, it may be managed through **physical activity** and **meal planning**, or may also require medications and/or insulin to control blood sugar more effectively.

A third type of diabetes, **gestational diabetes**, is a temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy. Gestational diabetes involves an increased risk of developing diabetes for both mother and child.<sup>3</sup> According to the 2002-2003 Regional Health Survey, one in eight First Nations women reported having gestational diabetes.<sup>4</sup>

## PREVENTION IS KEY

Healthy eating is important for overall health and wellness. Eating the right amount of healthy foods lessens the risk of developing diabetes. Healthy eating also helps control blood sugar

levels of people living with diabetes.

- Choose a variety of foods - like leaner meats (traditional or store-bought), vegetables and fruits, nuts and pulses, whole grain breads and cereals, low fat milk and yogurt
- Drink more water
- Eat foods high in fibre
- Eat less fast food, pop, chips and candy

People who are physically active are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes. Physical activity also helps control blood sugar levels in people living with diabetes. Being active does not necessarily mean joining a gym and lifting weights. People can exercise regularly by walking each day, gardening, playing, hiking, swimming, and other activities.

**Get Support** - there are many support networks for people living with diabetes, and people can ask their family and friends for support as well.

**Diabetes is a serious disease but people living with diabetes can have a healthy life by managing it well and understanding blood sugar levels and the importance of nutrition, physical activity, and diabetes medications.**

1 2013, Diabetes Canada

2 2012, First Nations Information Governance Centre  
3 2017, Diabetes Canada  
4 2005, First Nations Information Governance Centre

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