



## Diabetes Signs and Symptoms

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### The highs and lows of blood glucose

#### What to look out for

Experiencing persistently **high blood glucose** levels could suggest diabetes.

### Remember the 4Ts



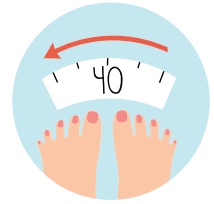
**Persistent Tiredness**



**Persistent Thirst**



**Toilet:**  
Urinating more than usual



**Thinner:**  
Unexpected weight loss

#### Additional potential symptoms



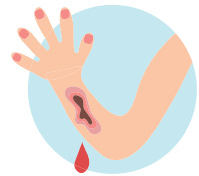
**Thrush/genital infections**



**Blurred vision**



**Increased hunger**



**Delayed wound healing**

These symptoms are usually reflective of high blood glucose levels and not diabetes specifically. Read on for further guidance and suggested action if you are concerned that you or someone you know may have some of these symptoms.

## TYPE 1 DIABETES

### Risk factors

- family history
- genetic predisposition
- pre-existing autoimmune condition
- testing positive for type 1 diabetes-associated antibodies

## TYPE 2 DIABETES

### Risk factors

- being overweight
- family history
- smoking
- previous heart attack or stroke
- physical inactivity
- unhealthy diet
- prediabetes
- gestational diabetes
- non-white ethnicities

## TYPE 3c DIABETES

Caused by other medical conditions affecting the pancreas, which include:

- pancreatitis
- pancreatic surgery
- pancreatic cancer
- cystic fibrosis



Type 1 diabetes	Type 2 diabetes	Type 3c diabetes
<p>A new diagnosis of type 1 diabetes (insulin deficiency) is more likely if these symptoms develop over a few days or weeks, possibly with these additional symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fruity-smelling breath (suggestive of high blood ketone* levels)</li> <li>• nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>• rapid breathing</li> </ul>	<p>A new diagnosis of type 2 diabetes is more likely if symptoms develop over a few months to years.</p>	<p>A new diagnosis of type 3c diabetes is more likely if there is a history of previous pancreatic disease (<i>as above</i>) and specific digestive issues developing over a few weeks to months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diarrhoea or loose stools that are floaty/hard to flush away</li> <li>• abdominal pains</li> <li>• bloating</li> </ul>
Shared symptoms regardless of diabetes type		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excessive thirst</li> <li>• peeing more day and night</li> <li>• constant fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unexpected weight loss</li> <li>• recurrent genital infections</li> </ul>	

\*ketones are produced when the body is short of insulin and is having to burn body fat to provide energy instead of glucose, which is abnormal and associated more with type 1 diabetes

## What should I do if I am experiencing symptoms of diabetes?

Contact your GP. They should at least perform a finger-prick blood glucose measurement and may also check blood or urine ketone levels based on the symptom duration.

They may start medication for you themselves or suggest urgent, same day hospital assessment if they are concerned about very high blood glucose and/or high ketone levels. There might be an urgent need to start insulin promptly, especially if type 1 diabetes is suspected.

You (and/or those with you) should be taught how to administer insulin and how to monitor your blood glucose levels at home, with all necessary equipment provided.



## Symptoms of low blood glucose (hypoglycaemia, “hypos”)

**The lows** – hypos are most commonly due to a mismatch between low blood glucose levels and high blood insulin (naturally produced or administered) levels. Low blood glucose levels cannot be used to diagnose diabetes.

### Early symptoms include:

- sweating
- palpitations
- tingling lips or tongue
- shaking
- dizziness, feeling light-headed
- irritability
- hunger

### Late symptoms (where the brain is more affected) include:

- headaches
- difficulty concentrating
- confusion
- blurred vision
- speech difficulty
- difficulty coordinating movements
- drowsiness

### Low blood glucose levels can be caused by:

- excessive or unplanned physical activity or exercise
- reduced carbohydrate intake (e.g. missed meals, vomiting)
- alcohol reducing the release of glucose from the liver into the blood

### Increased blood insulin levels can be associated with:

- increased insulin release in response to certain diabetes tablets
- excessive insulin dose or wrong administration times, lumpy injection sites or weight loss
- drug interactions



*Always seek medical advice if concerned.*



The Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation works towards educating, informing and reminding you of the best and healthiest choices to make.

If you would like to become part of our Diabetes Wellness community, visit our website for more details.

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Source references can be provided on request  
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