



**HERITAGE**  
Lower Saint Lawrence  
Bas-Saint-Laurent

free  
No. 19

# Think Healthy!

Your Family's Health Newsletter

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*Français au verso*

## What is Diabetes?

Here's why it's important to be aware:

Diabetes is a complex disease with multi-faceted causes and no known cure. It is defined by abnormal levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood, which can lead to serious complications such as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and even amputations, typically of the foot or leg. Diabetes is a global issue, but the impact can be felt in communities throughout Canada. If you don't have it, there is a very good chance someone in your family or circle of friends does.



**“ Currently, more than nine million Canadians, or one in four, are living with diabetes or prediabetes—a number expected to rise to one in three by 2020. It's important that Canadians educate themselves about the three different types of this disease to recognize if they are at risk ”.**

Source: [besthealthmag.ca](http://besthealthmag.ca)

**CHSSN**

Community Health  
And Social Services Network  
Réseau communautaire de santé  
et de services sociaux

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## Type 1

About 10 percent of people with diabetes have type 1. Although its cause remains unknown, people who have a family history of diabetes are considered at a higher risk of developing the disease. It usually begins in childhood and occurs when the body is unable to produce insulin, a hormone that controls the level of glucose in the blood.

Those affected require insulin therapy, which can be injected by pen, syringe or pump. The number of injections needed per day varies, as do the timing and dosage. People with type 1 diabetes must keep their blood-glucose levels in the target range. To measure levels, they can use a portable glucose meter that usually works by pricking a fingertip to draw a drop of blood. Until a cure is found for type 1 diabetes, this is a lifelong process.

## Type 2

This is the most common type of diabetes: Among Canadians with the disease, approximately 90 percent are affected by type 2, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not effectively use the insulin it produces. As a result, sugar builds up in the blood instead of being used for energy.

Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adulthood, although increasing numbers of children and adolescents in high-risk populations. Complications are the same for both types of diabetes.

Those affected by type 2 may be prescribed diabetes medications (including insulin and others). They may also need to monitor their blood-glucose levels; how often they need to test these levels will vary depending on the individual.

You may have heard the term “pre-diabetes.” This occurs when a person’s blood-glucose levels are elevated, but are not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2. Approximately 50 percent of those with prediabetes will go on to develop type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is not simply a disease of lifestyle-risk factors such as other health complications, age (being over 40), family history and ethnicity also increase a person’s chance of developing type 2 diabetes. While a healthy lifestyle is beneficial for everyone, it is especially important for people who are at high risk for diabetes because of these genetic or inherited factors. Changes such as increasing consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, eating whole grains, limiting portion sizes and increasing physical activity to maintain a healthy weight may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.



## Gestational

This is the third type of diabetes. It is a temporary condition that develops during pregnancy. Blood-glucose levels usually return to normal following delivery; however, both mother and child are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

## Low Blood Sugar - Also called “hypoglycemia”

Sometimes your blood sugar might become low. If that happens you may show the following signs of hypoglycemia:

- cold, clammy or sweaty skin
- pallor
- difficulty concentrating
- shakiness, lack of coordination (e.g. deterioration in writing or printing skills)
- irritability, hostility, and poor behaviour
- a staggering gait
- fatigue
- nervousness
- excessive hunger
- headache



## High Blood Sugar - Also called “hyperglycemia”

If your blood sugar is too high, you might:

- Be very thirsty
- Have to go to the bathroom all the time
- Feel tired and sleepy
- Have trouble seeing straight (things could look blurry)

All of these could be because of high blood sugar.

Source: [www.novonordisk.ca](http://www.novonordisk.ca)



**Do you have questions about diabetes?**

Diabetes Québec  
1 800 361-3504  
[www.diabete.qc.ca/en](http://www.diabete.qc.ca/en)

There are affiliated associations in each region,

**CONTACT US!**

## Healthy Tips

Healthy eating isn't that tough. It's all about eating balanced portions and a wide variety.

- Eat a wide variety of healthy foods
- Balance the number of calories you eat with your activity level
- Choose foods rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits and fat-free/low-fat milk products
- Eat lean meats (such as poultry and fish) and beans for protein
- Limit your intake of saturated fats, trans-fats and cholesterol
- Cut down on added sugars - that includes regular soft drinks which are high in calories
- Keep to sensible amounts of alcohol
- Have a proper breakfast every morning to stimulate your metabolism
- Space your eating throughout the day
- Don't skip meals

Don't expect to be perfect - it's nearly impossible to eat right all of the time. It's okay to have a treat every now and then as long as you stay motivated and on track most of the time.

Source: [www.novonordisk.ca](http://www.novonordisk.ca)

