



What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes happens when your body does not make or use insulin the right way. Insulin is important for your body to turn sugar from food into energy. There are three types of diabetes:

- **Type 1** diabetes happens when the body doesn't make insulin;
- **Type 2** diabetes happens when the body has trouble using the insulin it makes; and
- **Gestational diabetes** where the body can't use insulin during pregnancy.

Who gets diabetes?

Aboriginal people are more likely to get type 2 diabetes – the most common kind – than other Canadians. Younger Aboriginal people are developing type 2 diabetes more than before.

If I have type 2 diabetes, how can I best manage it?

Managing diabetes – through lifestyle and possibly medication – is a helpful way to slow or stop damage to your kidneys, poor circulation, heart disease or eye diseases.

How can a traditional lifestyle help prevent diabetes?

Diabetes was not always a health issue for Aboriginal people. When Aboriginal people had a traditional lifestyle with lots of physical activity and traditional foods, fewer people had diabetes.

Living a more traditional lifestyle can give Aboriginal people a way to prevent diabetes, and can help those who have diabetes live healthier lives.

To learn more about diabetes, visit your local health care provider, or go to: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/ADI

Aboriginal *Diabetes* Initiative

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