

# HIGH BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS

Decreasing your risk of diabetes



he@lth  
work

## Which risks do you tick?

Complete the following checklist to assess your other risks for this disease.

### Reduced risk of diabetes

- <45 years old
- Healthy blood glucose levels
- Non-smoking (active & passive)
- Healthy waist circumference (approx  $\leq 94$ cm for males &  $\leq 80$ cm for females)
- Adequate physical activity (minimum of 30 mins most days)
- Normal blood pressure ( $< 140/90$ )
- Daily intake of 2 serves of fruits & 5 serves of vegetables

### Increased risk of diabetes

- Male
- >45 years old
- High blood glucose levels ( $> 5.5$ mmol/L non fasting)
- Smoking (active & passive)
- Unhealthy waist circumference ( $> 94$ cm for males &  $> 80$ cm for females)
- Inadequate physical activity ( $< 30$  mins most days)
- High blood pressure ( $> 140/90$  or taking medication)
- Inadequate fruit & vegetables

## What is diabetes?

In a nutshell diabetes is a disease in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal which damages your nerves and blood vessels. The blood sugar is high because it is not being taken into the cells where it is needed for energy production. This happens because of problems with a hormone we make called insulin. Insulin acts like the key that unlocks all the doors for sugar to get out of the blood and into the cells.

Some individuals can't produce insulin – this is referred to as **Type 1 diabetes** and is often diagnosed during childhood and requires people to administer insulin on a daily basis. **It affects less than 1% of the Australian population and is due to an autoimmune disorder.**

The more common problem however, is when an individual makes less insulin and the hormone no longer opens all the doors creating the same end result of high blood sugar. This is called **Type 2 diabetes** and is typically diagnosed during adulthood.

**It affects approximately 4% of the Australian population (almost 800,000 in 2008) and is largely due to poor diet and lifestyle choices.**

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The 3 essential ingredients for reducing your risk of diabetes:

## Reduce your waist – reduce your risk

1

**Did you know that when it comes to excess weight - it's not just about how much you have it's about where you have it!**

Carrying excess weight around the abdomen specifically is considered to be one of the most potent risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Therefore when you're weighing up your diabetes risk – the scales may not tell you the full story but measuring your waist will! The recommended range for waist measurements is Men > 94cm, Women > 80cm. You may never be the 'perfect weight' according to your scales or your own judgements but any reduction in your waist measurement is a step away from diabetes.



## The best diet is NOT a diet

2

**Avoid any crash diets or radical eating patterns that promise you miracles and instead adopt a way of eating that is more moderate, well researched and sustainable for you.** A sensible first step for everyone is to eat less of the foods you usually have, reduce serves of meat, desserts & high fat foods and increase the amount of fruit and vegetables. The greater the contribution to your diet fruit and particularly vegetables make – the more likely you are to have a healthier weight and reduce your risks across the board for chronic illness. In addition to this, start giving yourself the food advice you might give a child – about some foods only being 'special treats' or 'party food' – these typically include the things that send blood glucose too high, such as soft drinks, lollies, chocolate, excessive fruit juice and energy drinks.



## Get physical

3

**You should be physically active every single day.** In fact you should aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Exercise can be anything that makes you puff and sweat and therefore could take lots of different forms :

- Running/walking/swimming/cycling
- Walking the dog
- Circuit training/boxing/weight training
- Yoga/pilates
- Dance classes/team sports
- Bushwalking/outdoor activities
- Playing with your kids at the park/bike riding with the kids
- Gardening



Helpful exercise resources: [www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/en/Living-with-Diabetes/Keeping-Active](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/en/Living-with-Diabetes/Keeping-Active)  
Diabetes prevention you are in the driving seat – so start driving in the direction you want to go!