

Thank you for reviewing our draft patient guide. We greatly appreciate your time and insights.

Once we collect all feedback, our writers and designer will edit the guide based on what we hear. This can include making it shorter and easier to read. To see an example of a designed guide, please see our draft patient guide for [Diabetes in Pregnancy](#). (Note: All guides may look different.)

When you're finished reading the draft patient guide, please fill out [this survey](#) by **October 10, 2019**.

**Health Quality  
Ontario**

*Let's make our health system healthier*

**Ontario** 

# Type 2 Diabetes

IMAGE TBD

**(sometimes called “the sugar”)**

What to discuss with your care team to help you receive high-quality care

## What is type 2 diabetes?

You might hear some people call type 2 diabetes “the sugar” or “a touch of sugar.” That’s because type 2 diabetes happens when there’s too much sugar—or glucose—in your blood. Blood sugar is your main source of energy. It comes from the food you eat, and a hormone (a special chemical) called insulin helps your body use this energy.

### What is prediabetes?

Your doctor might have told you that you have prediabetes. This means you have a higher chance of getting type 2 diabetes. The good news is that you can slow things down or even prevent type 2 diabetes with some changes to your diet and lifestyle.

Ask your health care provider about:

- Healthy eating and exercise ideas
- Ways to manage your weight
- When you should expect blood tests for type 2 diabetes
- How to prevent damage to your heart and blood vessels
- Medications that can help

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This guide will help you talk to your health care team about your diagnosis and how you feel about different parts of your type 2 diabetes journey. It supports those conversations, with questions to ask on:

- Finding out you have type 2 diabetes
- Staying healthy with type 2 diabetes
- Lowering your chance of complications
- Including your family and community in your care

If you don't have time to go through the entire guide, use this checklist as a quick reference when you talk to your care team.

The questions included in this guide are optional, and some may not apply to you. You might have other questions to ask, too. The more you talk to your care team, the more help you can get to manage your diabetes.

## Did you know?

- Roughly one in 10 people in Ontario has diabetes
- There are three main type of diabetes, and type 2 is the most common

## Learn more

[What is diabetes?](#) Here, Diabetes Canada shares more details about diabetes, treatments, and problems that can come with the condition.

## **Finding out you have type 2 diabetes**

Everyone's reaction to type 2 diabetes is different.

You might be relieved to find out why you're feeling unwell, or worried that diabetes will change your life too much. It can be hard to accept, but if type 2 diabetes runs in your family, you might already know what some of those changes could be.

### **Ask your health care team:**

.....  
How serious is type 2 diabetes? What does this mean for my health overall?

What are some symptoms of type 2 diabetes?

How will type 2 diabetes affect my other medical conditions?

What services are available to help me with type 2 diabetes?

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## Write it down

It may help you to take notes as your symptoms develop and change. Having written details will help you describe things clearly when you talk to your care team.

A friend or family member can also take notes for you while you talk to your care team. That can make it easier to remember your discussions with them.

*“Now that you know what it is, you try to work with the medications, the exercise, the new diabetic menu. It gives you a bit of hope that things are going to work out.”*

**PERSON WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES**

## Staying healthy with type 2 diabetes

Staying healthy with type 2 diabetes has its ups and downs. Some things in your life, like what you eat, or any medication you take, might change. But with those changes, time, and information, you'll be able to take care of yourself and feel better.

With all those things, you can also slow type 2 diabetes down. Your health care team can help you set goals, make a plan and support any challenges.

Here is a list of things to talk about with your care team. You can check off the ones that are most important to you.

### Food

- How eating affects type 2 diabetes
- Foods you can eat to stay healthy
- Low-cost food options
- Challenges with eating a healthy diet

### Weight

- What is considered a healthy weight for you
- If losing weight will help your type 2 diabetes
- What you can do to lose weight
- Challenges with staying at a healthy weight

### Exercise

- What exercises you can do
- Free or low-cost activities
- Challenges with staying active

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## Medications

- If taking medications will help your type 2 diabetes
- What medications to take
- When and how to check your blood sugar
- Low-cost medication options
- Challenges with taking medication

### Learn more

Find more helpful information from Diabetes Canada on [managing my diabetes](#), which shares:

- Tools and resources
- Recipes
- Preventing complications
- Kids, teens, and diabetes
- Webinars
- Impact stories



## Lowering your chance of complications

The extra sugar, or glucose, in your blood can create other health problems.

When you're diagnosed, your care team will check your overall health and review it regularly to watch for problems. They will take a series of tests, such as blood, vision, and blood pressure tests, and ask questions to check for issues such as:

- Kidney problems
- Problems with your heart and blood vessels
- Problems with vision
- High blood pressure
- Fat in the blood

They might also examine you for other problems that are linked to type 2 diabetes. Let your care team know if you've noticed any of the following:

- Tingling sensations
- Wounds or sores on your feet
- Problems with sex
- Bleeding or red gums
- Sadness or depression

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### Ask your care team:

.....

What warning signs should I look for?

How often will you check for problems?

Is there anything I can do to avoid these complications?

*“My grandmother is my role model, and I have seen how she lived well with diabetes.”*

PERSON WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

## Learn more

Diabetes Canada shares more information on problems related to diabetes and tips on preventing them:

- [Diabetes-related complications](#)
- [Preventing complications](#)

## Including your family or community in your care

It can help to include family and or community members in your care, even if it's just to take notes during a health care visit. Make sure that your care team knows who you want in your care circle.

### Ask your care team:

.....  
How can I talk to my family about having type 2 diabetes?

Can my family members come to my appointments?

What other ways can they be part of my care?

What tools can help them support my type 2 diabetes?

*“Whatever involves somebody involves the whole family. Family means the whole community.”*

**PERSON WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES**

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## For your reference: the quality standard in brief

Health Quality Ontario is committed to helping patients, health care providers, and organizations improve the quality of health care in Ontario.

We know that not everyone across the province receives the right care, every time. So, to help address gaps in care, we produce quality standards that outline **what quality care looks like** for specific conditions and situations, such as type 2 diabetes. Quality standards are based on current best evidence and input from patients, caregivers, and health care providers.

**This patient guide accompanies the quality standard on type 2 diabetes.**

If you're interested in the quality standard, below is a summary. To read more, you can [download it here](#).

### Screening for Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes

People who are asymptomatic yet susceptible to developing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes have their blood tested at regular intervals determined by their individual risk factors.

#### **What this means for you if you think you may have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes**

Your care provider should watch for any risk factors. If they think you are at risk for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, they will:

- Test your blood to see if you have increased sugar in your blood
- Explain how often you will need to retest your blood

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## **Reducing the Risk of Progression From Prediabetes to Type 2 Diabetes**

People with prediabetes and their caregivers collaborate with their care provider to create a tailored type 2 diabetes prevention plan.

### **What this means for you**

If you have prediabetes, your care provider should:

- Offer you a prevention program that includes coaching and support to help you learn how to prevent (or slow) prediabetes from becoming type 2 diabetes
- Monitor you closely for type 2 diabetes and do an assessment of your cardiovascular health

## **Weight Management for People With Prediabetes or Type 2 Diabetes**

People with prediabetes or type 2 diabetes are offered individualized weight management support options.

### **What this means for you**

If you have prediabetes, or have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, talk with your care provider about weight management. You may be a healthy weight already, and in this case, they will want to talk to you about how to continue to stay healthy. Your care provider should:

- Develop a plan with you and (if you choose) your caregivers or community. This plan should include coaching and support to help you learn about effective weight management techniques such as diet and exercise. It may also include medications if necessary or a discussion of other options

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## **Access to a Collaborative Care Team**

People with type 2 diabetes and their caregivers have access to a collaborative care team to comprehensively manage their diabetes and additional health care needs.

### **What this means for you**

You should have access to a health care team that manages your diabetes care. This team may include doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and others. The team members should:

- Treat you, your family, and community members as important members of your health care team
- Discuss and include your questions, concerns, observations, and goals into your care plan
- Support you so you can play an active role in your own care

## **Promoting Self-Management Skills in People With Type 2 Diabetes**

People with type 2 diabetes and their caregivers collaborate with their care providers to create a tailored self-management program with the goal of enhancing their skills and confidence so that they can be actively involved in their own care.

### **What this means for you**

Starting from diagnosis you should receive coaching and support to help you learn about managing your type 2 diabetes effectively. If you choose to include your caregivers, they can also be offered this information and coaching.

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## **Screening for Complications and Risk Factors**

People with type 2 diabetes are screened for associated complications and risk factors at diagnosis and at regular follow-up intervals.

### **What this means for you**

Around the time of diagnosis, your care provider should:

- Do an assessment test and ask you about any signs and symptoms of diabetes complications or risk factors. This is done to prevent diabetes-related problems or to catch them before they get worse
- Continue to check you for these possible complications and risk factors

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## What's next?

### **Remember, everybody is different.**

The support you need and the care plan you develop with your care providers will be unique to you.

### **This conversation guide is only a starting point.**

You may have other topics you want to cover with your care providers. It's important to speak to them about any other questions or concerns.

### **Need more information?**

If you have any questions or feedback about this guide, please contact us at [qualitystandards@hqontario.ca](mailto:qualitystandards@hqontario.ca) or 1-866-623-6868.

For more reading on type 2 diabetes, read the quality standard at:

[hqontario.ca/qualitystandards](http://hqontario.ca/qualitystandards)

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