

Type 2 diabetes controllable

Question: How is type 2 diabetes different than other diseases?

Answer: Type 2 diabetes is a chronic disease that results when your body doesn't properly use or make insulin, which helps store food in our cells for energy. Several aspects make it different than other diseases:

» You take over a non-functioning part of your body. With diabetes, you have to assume the job of your pancreas, which produces insulin. Proper diet, level of activity and medications are used to keep blood-sugar levels within target range.

» You are swimming against the tide of today's society. Maintaining healthy blood-sugar levels is tough when food is part of social activities, portion sizes are huge, and we are too busy or tired to prepare nutritious meals or be active.

» You can have diabetes and not know

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it. The symptoms come on gradually and mimic other things. For example, you may be especially thirsty or tired and attribute it to being in the desert or being very busy.

» It can be prevented or delayed. The key to warding off type 2 diabetes is a healthy lifestyle.

» It can be managed. While some diseases are debilitating, thousands of people with diabetes live happy, healthy lives by managing their disease through diet, exercise and/or medications.

That's not to say it's easy. It can be difficult to maintain the right blood glucose level because it continually changes and is affected by variables such as diet, medication, activity and stress.

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