

## BALANCE

It is when we as Indigenous people live in balance of our spiritual, physical, emotional and mental aspects that we have optimal well-being. Diabetes is often a silent disease and therefore, one may not experience signs or symptoms. ***That is why it is so important to do what you can NOW to live in a healthy way.***

### REMEMBER

Get tested once per year, whether or not you believe you are at risk.

With the drastic lifestyle changes Indigenous people have undergone in the past centuries, it is said that simply being of Indigenous descent is a risk factor for development of type 2 diabetes.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

## THE OWL



The owl is very wise! With wisdom comes knowledge and how to use it. Learn all that you can about diabetes.

Ask questions! Your Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Traditional Healers etc. will be able to provide you with answers or guidance. No questions is a silly question, and in fact, it is sillier to keep quiet. Silence will prevent you from knowing what you deserve to know about how to keep yourself healthy.

## CONTACT US

# HEAD OFFICE

## 1.888.514.1370

[www.idhc.life](http://www.idhc.life)

E-mail: [info@idhc.life](mailto:info@idhc.life)

The contents of this pamphlet is for information only. The Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle recommends that you contact a health professional for specific medical, health and foot care concerns regarding diabetes and current health status and physical activity levels.



*The Owl*  
IS WISE AND  
KNOWS HOW  
TO USE HIS  
KNOWLEDGE



# DIABETES

In The Indigenous Community

& Diabetes Prevention

## WHAT IS DIABETES?

**DIABETES** is a chronic disease where the body can not properly store and use sugar that comes from foods and beverages taken in.

To understand diabetes you first need to know:

### What happens during NORMAL food or beverage intake?

- 1** Eat food. The food turns into glucose (sugar), which then digests into the blood stream.
- 2** Brain gets the message, "Too much sugar in the blood" and sends a message to the pancreas to release insulin.
- 3** Pancreas releases insulin into the blood stream. It takes the sugar out of the blood and into body cells to be used for energy!

### So what is happening when a person has diabetes?

#### One of 2 situations

- The body has NO insulin or not enough insulin.
- The body can not properly use insulin that is produced.

***In both cases, too much sugar stays in the blood because it can not get into the body cells to be used for energy.***

## 3 TYPES OF DIABETES

**TYPE 1** - The pancreas produces no insulin. This type of diabetes occurs most often in children and young adults and requires insulin injections for life. About 10% of people living with diabetes have Type 1.

**TYPE 2** - The pancreas produces some insulin but not enough, OR the body can't properly use the insulin it does make. It most often occurs in adults, but children as young as 6 are being diagnosed! About 90% of people living with diabetes have Type 2.

**GESTATIONAL** - This type occurs during pregnancy and disappears when the infant is born.

## SIGNS & SYMPTONS

- Unusual thirst
- Extreme tiredness
- Blurred vision
- Frequent urination
- Headaches
- Cuts and scrapes that take a long time to heal
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Tingling or numbness in hands, legs and/or feet
- Difficulty getting and maintaining an erection



**SOMETIMES NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL.**

***It is wise to get tested!***

## COMPLICATIONS AND RISK FACTORS

Poorly managed or undiagnosed diabetes can result in several very serious complications:

- Blindness
- Heart Disease
- Kidney Problems or Failure
- Nerve Damage & Amputation
- Erectile Dysfunction
- Depression

### Risk Factors

- Being of Aboriginal ancestry
- Being overweight
- Having family members who live with diabetes
- Being inactive - living a sedentary lifestyle
- Having had gestational diabetes or given birth to a baby over 9lbs.

### Minimizing Risk

- Maintaining a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, high fibre grains, low fat meat and dairy products and lots of water. LIMIT processed, packaged foods high in fat, sugar and salt and enjoy sweet treats only sometimes.
- Adults should get at least 30-60 minutes of exercise per day and children should get at least 60-90 minutes per day.

***LIMIT TELEVISION TIME!***