



WORLD **DIABETES** FOUNDATION

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MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Facts about Diabetes

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- In 2010, some 285 million people will live with diabetes worldwide¹. The World Health Organization (WHO) is warning of a diabetes epidemic, with this number expected to rise to 438 million by 2030 due to a combination of population ageing, unhealthy diets, obesity and sedentary lifestyle. WHO predicts that developing countries will bear the brunt of the diabetes epidemic in the 21st century.
- Diabetes is an illness that occurs when the body lacks insulin either because the pancreas does not produce any insulin, or only a very small amount, or because the cells in the body are resistant towards the insulin produced in the body. The two conditions are in general referred to as type 1 and type 2 diabetes.
- Type 1 diabetes, also known as insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes, develops if the body produces too little insulin or none at all. This is caused by the destruction of insulin producing cells due to an immune reaction. It normally occurs at a younger age and people with type 1 diabetes rely on insulin injections for survival.
- Type 2 diabetes, also known as noninsulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-onset diabetes, refers to a state where a person's body is incapable of using the insulin produced. Up to 90% of all cases of diabetes are type 2. Type 2 diabetes usually appears in people over the age of 40, but earlier appearance is on the increase. When the disease occurs at a younger age it is mainly due to overweight caused by changes in peoples' lifestyle resulting in unhealthy eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle.
- The symptoms of diabetes are typically extreme thirst, frequent passing of water and heavy weight loss over a short period. Other symptoms include fatigue, frequent infections, itching and rashes as well as disturbed vision. However, some people show none of these symptoms.
- Type 1 diabetes is treated with insulin in connection with meals. If diagnosed early, the symptoms of type 2 diabetes can often be reduced with diet, exercise and medicine which help the body absorb the insulin produced in the pancreas. As the disease gradually develops, most patients will need insulin injections after some years. Due to the gradual nature of type 2 diabetes the number of undiagnosed people with diabetes is very high. The disease is often diagnosed when the person experiences complications of the diabetes such as loss of vision or numbness in the feet.
- Diabetes is an under-recognised and under-recorded cause of death. With modern treatment, a person with diabetes can lead a normal and active

¹ IDF Diabetes Atlas, 2009



life. However, when diabetes goes undetected, and consequently untreated, the likelihood of medical complications increases. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels, which can lead to heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, and particularly in developing countries, foot infections, gangrene and amputation of the limbs.

Why does the body need insulin?

When we eat, carbohydrates in our food are broken down into glucose. This is transported through the blood into the body's cells. Insulin, produced in the pancreas, works like a key to open the cells, so that the glucose can be absorbed and converted into energy. When people with diabetes eat, glucose builds up in their blood, which eventually spills over into the urine before leaving the body. People with type 1 diabetes need several insulin injections every day, ideally around meal-times, to facilitate the uptake of glucose in the cells. People with type 2 diabetes can usually control their blood sugar level with diet, weight loss, exercise, and oral medications. Yet, more than half of all people with type 2 diabetes require insulin at some point in the course of their illness.

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The World Diabetes Foundation

The World Diabetes Foundation is dedicated to supporting prevention and treatment of diabetes in the developing world through funding of sustainable projects. The Foundation creates partnerships and acts as a catalyst to help others do more and strives to educate and advocate globally in an effort to create awareness, care and relief to those impacted by diabetes. The World Diabetes Foundation has funded 236 projects to date in 90 countries with a total project portfolio of USD 223.7 million, of which USD 76.6 million were donated by the Foundation.

The establishment of the World Diabetes Foundation was announced by its founding father Novo Nordisk A/S on World Diabetes Day 2001. The Foundation was legally established in February 2002. A donation programme by the founding company of a maximum of DKK 650 million over a period of ten years was approved by its General Assembly and shareholders in March 2002.

In March 2008, the shareholders of Novo Nordisk A/S approved an additional endowment of a maximum of DKK 575 million over another ten-year period, bringing the two endowments from Novo Nordisk A/S up to a total maximum of DKK 1.2 billion in the period 2001-2017, i.e. the equivalent of USD 255 million (exchange rate of 4.8). The Foundation is registered as an independent trust and governed by a board of six experts in the field of diabetes, access to health and development assistance.

For further information please visit our website: www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org