

So You Have Type 2 Diabetes....

What It Means

Your body gets energy by making sugar (glucose) from foods like bread, potatoes, milk and fruit. To use this sugar, your body needs insulin – a hormone that helps your body control the level of sugar in your blood. If you have type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't produce enough insulin, or your body can't use the insulin it makes. That means sugar builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy. High blood sugar can make you feel sick and harm many parts of your body like the eyes, heart, blood vessels, nerves, and kidneys. It can also increase the chances of developing other health problems

What You Can Do About It

You may be able to reduce your blood sugar by making two important changes – being more active and choosing healthy food most of the time. Losing even a bit of weight can make a huge difference. It's easier to make these changes when the whole family works together. So...

- Ask your family to eat the same healthy foods – like fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads, and low-fat meats, milk, cheese, and snacks like popcorn without butter.
- Ask your family to keep healthy foods in the house, and not to tempt you with cookies, cake, candy or pop.
- Get your whole family active. Play ball, ride bikes, go for a walk together – whatever you enjoy doing. Aim for 60 minutes a day.

Set goals that you can meet:

- Start small and work your way up. For example: "I will cut down on pop and drink water or diet pop instead." When you've reached that...add another goal — "I will bike ride a couple of times a week." Then "I will eat fewer cookies, burgers, and fries."
- Don't set goals that will be too hard to meet. For example, don't say you'll never eat a burger or a candy bar again. Instead, say you'll eat only one a week.

At some point, you may need to take medication – either metformin (that you take by mouth) and/or insulin (that is injected with an insulin pen or syringe).

Put Technology to Work

There are plenty of apps that can help you lose weight, get more active and keep track of your blood sugar levels and medication. Here are some well-designed, free smartphone apps that you can find online: Lose It!, MyNetDiary, MyFoodDiary (7 day free trial), MyFitnessPal, Digifit, Diabetes Log, Glucose Buddy, Wavesense Diabetes Manager.

Keep in mind there are many more potentially useful apps available, and some may cost a few dollars to get the features you want.

Sources: 1) Tips for Teens with Diabetes. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes. 2005. Available at <http://www.diabetesinmichigan.org/EdHandout/PDF/NDEPTips4Teenstype2.pdf>; **2)** Tran J, Tran R, White Jr. JR. Smartphone-based glucose monitors and applications in the management of diabetes: An overview of 10 salient "apps" and a novel smartphone-connected blood glucose monitor. *Clinical Diabetes* 2012; 30(4):173-8.