

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is one of the **most common chronic health conditions worldwide**, affecting approximately **1.3 million people in Australia**. While many people have heard of diabetes, there are still many misconceptions about what it actually is, how it develops, and how lifestyle factors like **exercise can help** manage it.

Diabetes is a condition that affects how the body controls blood sugar (glucose). Glucose is the body's main source of energy, and insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, which helps move glucose from the bloodstream into the body's cells to be used for energy. When the body either cannot produce enough insulin or cannot use insulin properly, blood sugar levels become too high. Over time, high blood sugar can affect many parts of the body and lead to health complications if not managed properly.

TYPE 1 DIABETES



Type 1 Diabetes (T1DM) – Approximately 10%

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the body attacks the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. As a result, the body produces little or no insulin, meaning lifelong insulin therapy is required. It is commonly diagnosed in children and young adults but can occur at any age.

Common Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes

- Frequent urination (polyuria)
- Excessive thirst (polydipsia)
- Increased hunger (polyphagia)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue and weakness
- Blurred vision
- Mood changes or irritability

TYPE 2 DIABETES

Type 2 Diabetes (T2DM) – Approximately 85%

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or cannot produce enough insulin to maintain healthy blood glucose levels. It is the most common type of diabetes and is strongly linked to lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, as well as genetics. Although more common in adults, it is increasingly being diagnosed in younger people.

Common Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes

- Increased thirst and urination
- Low energy and fatigue
- Slow-healing wounds
- Frequent infections
- Blurred vision
- Numbness or tingling in hands and feet
- Unexplained weight gain or weight loss

COMMON MYTHS

“If I take medication, I don’t need to exercise.”

Medication is important, but exercise plays a major role in improving blood glucose control, cardiovascular health, strength, mobility, and overall wellbeing.

“Eating sugar causes diabetes.”

This is a common misconception. While excessive intake of high-calorie foods can contribute to weight gain and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, diabetes itself is far more complex and influenced by genetics, lifestyle, and other health factors.

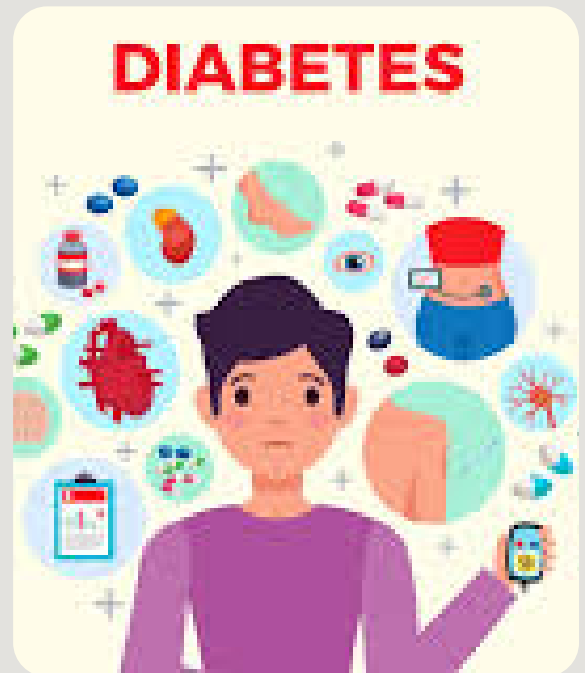
EXERCISE RECOMMENDATIONS

Exercise is considered a cornerstone of diabetes management and prevention.

Benefits of Regular Exercise Include:

- Improved blood glucose control
- Increased insulin sensitivity
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease
- Improved energy levels
- Better weight management
- Increased muscle strength and endurance
- Improved mental health and confidence
- Reduced stress levels
- Better sleep quality

For people with T2DM, regular physical activity can significantly improve insulin resistance. For those with T1DM, exercise can improve cardiovascular fitness, strength, and overall quality of life when blood glucose is carefully monitored.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Exercise is a **key component of diabetes management** and should be tailored to the individual, particularly for those using insulin or blood glucose-lowering medications.

Current guidelines recommend aiming for **at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise** per week, spread across at **least three days**, alongside **2–3 resistance training sessions** per week to improve blood glucose control, muscle strength, and overall health.

Before exercising, individuals should **monitor their blood glucose levels, stay hydrated**, wear appropriate footwear, and regularly **check their feet for injuries**. With appropriate guidance and consistency, exercise is one of the most effective tools for preventing and managing diabetes and improving long-term health outcomes.



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- Book online today at Yawa Aquatic Centre
 - [Yawa - Nookal Online Bookings](#)
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RESOURCES & REFERENCES

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/living-with-diabetes/exercise/>