

# DIABETES AWARENESS

2023-2024 Tennessee 4-H Healthy Living Ambassadors

## OVERVIEW

Diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy. Most of the food you eat is broken down into sugar (also called glucose) and released into your bloodstream. When your blood sugar goes up, it signals your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy. If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it makes as well as it should. When there isn't enough insulin or cells stop responding to insulin, too much blood sugar stays in your bloodstream. Over time, that can cause serious health problems such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease. There isn't a cure for diabetes yet, but managing body weight, eating healthy food, and being active can help.

## HOW TO PREVENT

- **Being active for most days of the week**
  - Adults should get at least 2.5 hours of moderately intense activity every week. Taking 30 minutes walks 5 days per week is a good goal.
  - Kids should get 60 minutes of activity each day. This can be in 10-15 minutes increments or all at once.
  - Make activity fun.
  - Plan active outings like hiking or biking.
  - Move more in and around the house like vacuuming, raking leaves, gardening, etc.
- **Eating a healthy diet**
  - Roast, broil, grill, steam or bake. Avoid frying.
  - Eat vegetables with every meal. Get creative!
  - Drink plenty of water.
  - Eat slowly - it takes at least 20 minutes to start feeling full
  - Eat at the table rather than in front of a screen
  - Shop on a full stomach so you're not tempted to buy unhealthy food
  - Learn how to read food labels
  - Don't insist kids clean their plates but rather eating until full
  - Serve small portions; let kids ask for seconds
  - Reward with praise instead of food



## RISK FACTORS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

- Being overweight can cause insulin resistance
- Physical activity level
- Age matters
- Having a family member with type 2
- Being born to a mom with gestational diabetes
- Having one or more conditions related to insulin resistance