

Diabetes risk factors



There are many risk factors for type 2 diabetes; there are some you can change and some you can't. Take control of those you can and you can easily ameliorate those you can't.

Some people are just more prone to developing type 2 diabetes because of risks they cannot change, but most of the time, the disease develops because of risk factors that can be changed.

Modifiable risk factors

- **Diet.** A diet low in fresh fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, and lean protein increase the risk of type 2 diabetes. Higher consumption of refined and processed foods like cakes, sweets, baked goods, processed meats, and fatty foods greatly increase your risk. Changing your diet is an easy way to reduce your risk.
- **Lifestyle.** Living a sedentary lifestyle with little physical activity increases your risk of diabetes. Doing just 10-30 minutes of exercise every day can dramatically lower your risk of the disease.
- **Habits.** Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, and living a high-stress life can increase your risk of diabetes. Reduce your alcohol intake (one drink a day for women and two for men), quit smoking, and take control of your stress levels through exercise or meditation to keep your risk low.

Non-modifiable risk factors

- **Age.** The older you get the higher your risk of diabetes. Your body changes as you get older and it's this that can reduce the optimal function of sugar and insulin in your body. It's why it's best to start looking after your health from an early age.
- **Family history.** If you have a relative that has had diabetes, you're at greater risk of developing it. Have regular blood sugar assessments if you do have a family history of the disease.
- **Heritage.** The highest risk of diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa is in the Indian population, which is followed by those of mixed race, Africans, and Caucasians.
- **Gender.** Men are at greater risk of developing diabetes than women.

While there are many factors that increase your risk of diabetes that you can't change, making sure your diet is healthy, doing exercise daily, and watching your habits can make a dramatic impact on your risk, even if your age, family history, heritage, and gender increases your risk.