

How Diabetes Affects Various Parts Of The Body



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Diabetes affects an estimated [29 million](#) people in the United States, and although the disease can be caused by many factors and can come in different forms, the symptoms are usually very similar.

Some people are diagnosed with it at a very early age; this is usually called Type 1 diabetes and is actually an immune system disorder. The body attacks cells in the pancreas which produce insulin, a hormone that helps break down the sugar from food turns it into glucose for energy.

In Type 2 diabetes, sufferers can't respond to the insulin that their body is producing, causing healthy cells in the pancreas to overwork themselves and die off. While Type 1 requires insulin medication, Type 2 can potentially be treated in early stages by [diet](#) and cardio exercise, such as [swimming](#), as long as blood sugar is carefully monitored.

If left untreated or undiagnosed, diabetes can take a toll on the body in many different ways. It can have devastating effects on the kidneys, heart, skin, lower extremities, blood vessels, eyes, and teeth. Because it can cause a lack of saliva production, diabetes is often responsible for dry mouth, which in turn can cause cavities, inflamed gums, and painful infections. Practicing good [oral hygiene](#) and visiting the dentist regularly can help tremendously with gum and teeth problems.

High glucose levels can affect the [circulatory system](#), as well, causing fatty buildups inside blood vessels and making it harder for blood to flow to extremities. People who suffer from diabetes often have trouble with their legs and feet, and in extreme cases they may lose one or both feet. Because lack of blood flow makes it difficult to feel injuries to the bottom of the feet, infection can set in and spread quickly.

Diabetes can also affect blood vessels in the eye, causing them to swell and leak. This can lead to cataracts, glaucoma, or even blindness. People suffering with diabetes should see the eye doctor regularly and have checkups, particularly if their vision is plagued by spots.

It's extremely important for sufferers of diabetes to see a doctor as early into the disease as possible to check the kidneys, as they are harshly affected by excess sugars in the blood which can lead to kidney failure if untreated.

Diabetes can also affect the skin, leaving it dry and cracked. The temptation to over-moisturize can lead to negative consequences for some, as excess moisture left in folds of skin (such as between the toes) can lead to infection.

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