



# **Medical Aspects of Diabetes**

## **MEDICAL ASPECTS OF DIABETES**

Diabetes is a disease in which the body either does not make any insulin or it makes insulin but the insulin is not working correctly. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas. Insulin allows the glucose (sugar found in the blood) to enter cells and to be turned into energy. Insulin is the key that the cells need to unlock the doors of the cells so the glucose can enter the cells. Glucose is the body's main source of energy. In uncontrolled diabetes, glucose remains in the blood and with time causes damage to the body's organs.

There are two main types of diabetes, type 1 and type 2. The most common is type 2. It affects between 90 to 95% of people with diabetes and usually appears after the age of 40. This is the type of diabetes most of your clients will have. The other, type 1, affects about 5 to 10% of those with diabetes and is usually seen in children. Please remember that some of your clients may have gotten diabetes at an earlier age and may have type 1 diabetes.

### **Type 1 Diabetes**

Type 1 diabetes used to be called insulin dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes. It has a very sudden onset, meaning the symptoms appear very quickly. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas does not make any insulin. Because the pancreas is not making insulin, the person with type 1 diabetes must take daily insulin injections for the rest of the person's life. Type 1 diabetes may be inherited, is more common in certain ethnic groups, and may be related to viruses. People with type 1 diabetes are usually thin, not heavy. The symptoms may include extreme thirst, dry mouth, urinating often, extreme tiredness, losing weight without trying. The person with type 1 diabetes needs insulin for survival. In addition to insulin, type 1 diabetes is also treated with meal planning, exercise, controlling weight, and diabetes patient self-management education. Very few of your clients will have type 1 diabetes.

### **Type 2 Diabetes**

Type 2 diabetes used to be called non-insulin dependent diabetes or adult onset diabetes. In type 2 diabetes, the body is still making insulin but using the insulin incorrectly. More women than men have type 2 diabetes. Some reasons that one may be more likely to get diabetes are lack of activity, being overweight, and getting older. It is more common in African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. Type 2 diabetes also runs in families. Type 2 diabetes appears slowly. The classic symptoms of diabetes such as extreme thirst, urinating often, extreme tiredness, weight loss without trying are usually mild or not present when type 2 diabetes is diagnosed. In fact, many people see their doctors for other problems and are diagnosed with diabetes at that time. Type 2 diabetes is treated with meal planning, exercise, and weight loss. Some people with type 2 diabetes may need diabetes pills or insulin injections to treat the diabetes and to better control their blood glucose levels. About 40% of people with type 2 diabetes will need insulin injections.