

# Overcoming Diabetes

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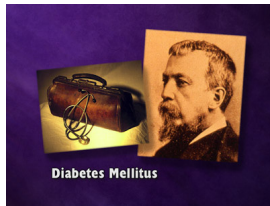


Today we are going to learn about overcoming diabetes.

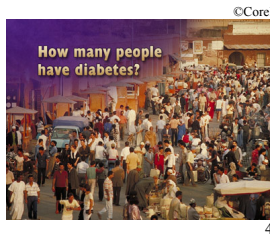
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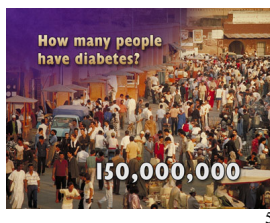
Long ago, doctors saw that some sick people urinated a lot, and their urine attracted ants! What was in the urine? They found that it was very sweet!



Nobody knew why, they just called the disease “Diabetes Mellitus,” which means “to urinate a lot of sweet urine.” We still use this name, but today we know much more about the disease.



**How many people have diabetes?**



There are about 150 million people with Diabetes in the world today, and every day this number increases.<sup>1</sup>

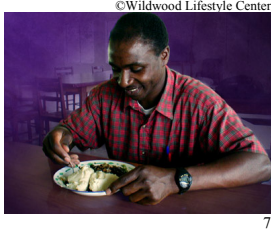
The good news is that there are many things you can do to keep this disease away or even overcome it.



**What is Diabetes?**

First we need to know what happens to our food in our bodies.

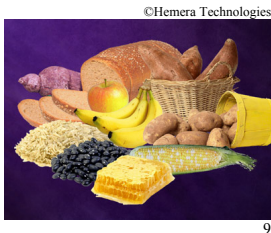
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Some kinds of food help our bodies grow; others give us **energy**.



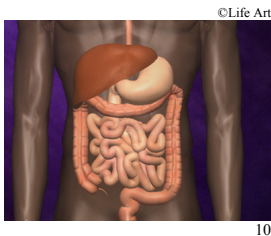
People, like cars and motorcycles, need **energy** to work. But our energy comes from food, not gasoline.



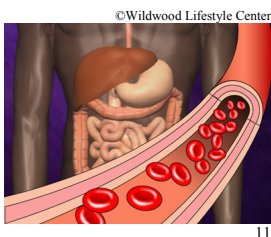
Which energy foods do you know?

(Note: Presenter should mention the ones that are known to the people locally)

Potatoes, bread, grains, rice, corn, cassava, yams, sugar and honey are all energy foods. Fruits and beans, also give us a lot of energy.



These energy foods are changed in the body into something **very sweet** called **glucose**.

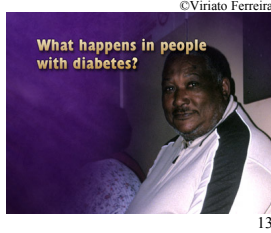


Glucose goes into the blood to become the energy for the body. The blood actually becomes sweet after we eat these foods.



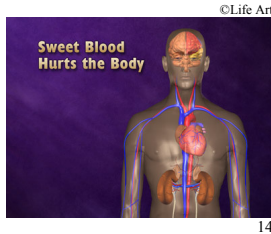
Every part of the body needs this energy. As the body uses it, the blood becomes less sweet and goes back to normal in an hour or two.

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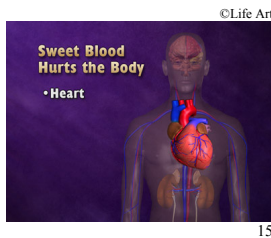


## What happens in people with Diabetes?

When people with diabetes eat energy foods, their blood **stays** sweet for a long time. They can't use the energy in the blood.

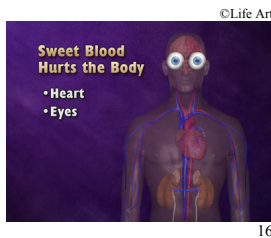


Having sweet blood for a long time hurts the body.



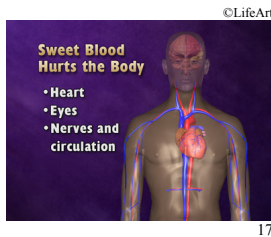
- Heart

The heart may become weak and may even stop suddenly



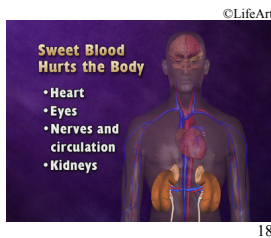
- Eyes

The eyes may be damaged, and some people go blind.



- Nerves and circulation

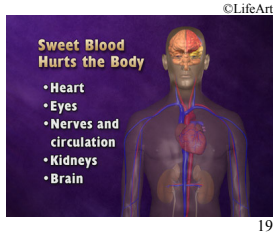
The legs, feet and toes may have poor circulation or feeling and may even need to be removed by amputation.



- Kidneys

The kidneys may stop working, so that some people with diabetes may need to have their blood cleaned by a machine.

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- Brain

The person may have a stroke, and brain damage may cause memory loss or even paralysis of part of the body



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In the beginning, most people who have sweet blood feel completely fine! The body may be hurt without the person knowing it!



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There may be warning signs when someone has very sweet blood for a long time: These signs are:



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- Passing a lot of urine



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- Being very thirsty or hungry all the time



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- Having poor vision

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- Lacking feeling in the hands or feet



- Slow healing of sores



- Getting skin infections very often

## How can you know if you have diabetes?

If you have any of these problems you may have diabetes.



You can have a simple blood test to find out. The health worker checks how sweet the blood is. People who are overweight or have close family members with diabetes should also have a blood test.



Another way to find out is to check the urine to see if it is sweet. Your health worker can easily do this at the clinic.



## What Causes Diabetes?

# Overcoming Diabetes



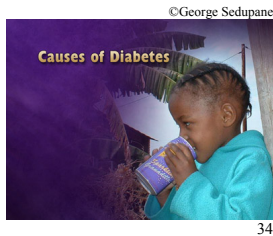
There are two kinds of Diabetes. One kind affects mainly young people, even small children. Nobody really knows why this happens. One cause may be giving animal milk to babies too early. Babies should be breast-fed for as long as possible.



The other kind of diabetes affects older people. This is the most common kind.



Doctors say that almost everyone with this kind of diabetes gets it from the way they live! What we eat or drink, how little we work and rest may make us sick with this disease.

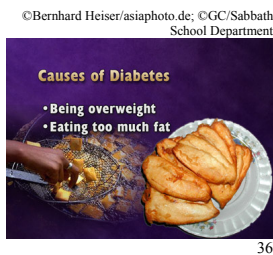


**Here are some examples of things people do that may cause this kind of diabetes:**



- Being overweight

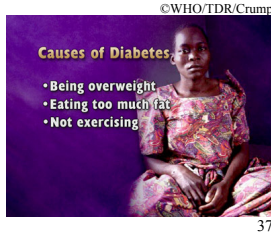
Many people become overweight because they eat too much. They eat foods with lots of energy, but don't work much with their muscles.



- Eating too much fat

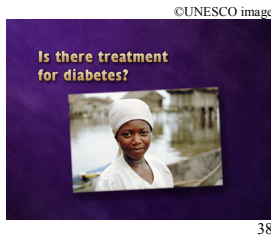
Eating too much fat, like butter, ghee, and fried foods, is not good for us and may make us get diabetes. Meat, fish and cheese also have a lot of fat; eating a lot of these is dangerous.

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- Not exercising

Regular exercise may be the best way to prevent this kind of diabetes. If you are not doing other work that uses your muscles, walking 30 minutes each day is one good way to stay healthy.



**Is there treatment for diabetes?**



Yes! Diabetes can be treated.



The **first kind** of diabetes, that affects mainly young people, needs a medicine called **insulin**. Everyone with this kind of diabetes needs to take insulin for the rest of their lives. Insulin will help the blood not to become too sweet.



The **second kind** of diabetes that affects mainly older people is often treated with medicine, but many times it is not needed. Most people can treat this kind of diabetes by **eating right** and **being very active**.



Every person with diabetes should learn how to eat better. Eating good food will help both kinds of diabetes.

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What is good food? Many people believe that a lot of meat and fish is good. This is not the best.



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Many people also believe that food made with very fine flour like white bread or fine milled corn is better. This is not true! Whole grains are much better than refined, polished grains! Just like eating the whole fruit is much better than drinking fruit juice!



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God made very good food for us to eat.

He made fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains (like rice, corn and wheat) for us to enjoy. The best way to eat these foods is to prepare them in as simple a way as possible.



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Brown rice is a much better and stronger food than white rice.



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People with diabetes shouldn't eat too many energy foods like potatoes, yams, rice, fruits or bread at one meal. The blood can become very sweet, even if the food does not taste sweet!

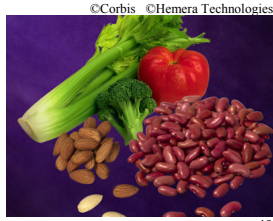


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Here is an example: Choose one energy food, like potatoes.



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Also, eat vegetables, and something like beans or nuts with it.



People with diabetes should be very active. The muscles use up the energy from the blood and the blood will not be so sweet.



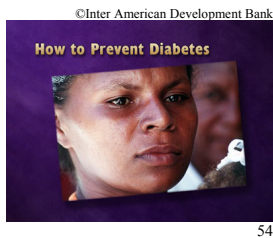
Working in the garden or getting water from the river or well, walking and riding a bicycle are good activities.



Many people work in jobs that don't need physical work and they sit for most of the day.



They should try to walk to work, or try to walk every day, at least for half an hour.



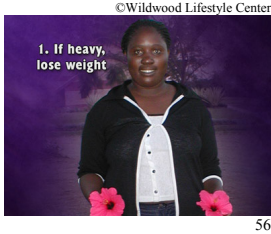
What can we do to prevent getting Diabetes?

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Often people believe that they only have to stop eating sweets and sugar, to avoid getting diabetes. This may help, but we need to do more.

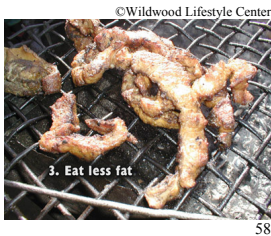
In summary, here are some suggestions:



1. If you are heavy, it's important to lose some weight. We need to eat well and look good, but heavy people often become sick with diabetes and many other serious diseases.



2. Eat healthy! Eat enough vegetables and fruits, nuts and beans and, only a little meat and fish if needed.



3. Eat less fat, especially the fat from animals. This is really not good for you.



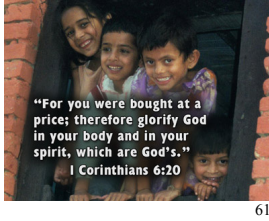
4. Be active. Work with your muscles. This will help you to be healthy.



God gave us simple advice in the Bible that can help us have the very best health.

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“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” 1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV

Diabetes is a harmful disease and we should do everything we can to avoid it. What we eat, how often we eat, and the amount of exercise and proper rest, all these things help us to have strong bodies. May the Lord bless you as you live and eat in the very best way for good health.

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Adapted from “Where There Is No Doctor”, David Werner, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999

<sup>1</sup> Diabetes News. World Health organization. Geneva. May 2001  
Web Site: [http://www.who.int/ncd/dia/dia\\_news.htm](http://www.who.int/ncd/dia/dia_news.htm)