

4 Ways to Explain Type 2 Diabetes to Your Kids

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Children are naturally curious. When someone in the family is diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, embrace it as a teachable moment. When your kids understand what Type 2 Diabetes is and how to manage it, they'll be able to learn how to have a healthy lifestyle, too!

There are many educational resources explaining what diabetes is, for adults, but read below to find kid-friendly answers!

What is Type 2 Diabetes?

First, food is converted to sugar, which provides energy for the body. That energy lets us do activities like walking, playing, and reading! But too much sugar in our bodies isn't good for us, so our bodies also make something called **insulin**—and that controls how much sugar is in our bodies. For people with Type 2 Diabetes, the amount of insulin their body makes is not enough, which causes sugar levels to go up. That can make someone very sick.

2. Can kids get Type 2 Diabetes, too?

If your parent has diabetes or if you're overweight, you could get diabetes as a kid, too. But don't worry. If you eat healthy food and stay active, you can help your body respond to insulin, and lower the risk that you'll get Type 2 Diabetes as a child.

A note for parents: Type 2 Diabetes is caused by many factors, including lack of physical activity, weight gain, but also genetics and puberty. Explaining this to kids eliminates fear and allows them to make healthy lifestyle choices with confidence. Try encouraging your kids to get more exercise (playing outside, sports, swimming), and cooking healthier foods at home. For example, check out these kid-friendly, diabetic snack recipes that I suggest!

3. What are the signs of Type 2 Diabetes?

Here are a few signs and symptoms of diabetes to watch out for:

- Peeing a lot

- Always being thirsty
- Being tired all the time
- Experiencing blurred vision
- Cuts and bruises that don't heal well or quickly
- Sometimes, there are no symptoms
- See a [full list of symptoms here!](#)

A note for parents: Explaining the symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes shows children how important it is to communicate with you so they can see a doctor right away.

4. How do you treat Type 2 Diabetes?

Many people living with Type 2 Diabetes live normal and active lives! Each person has a different type of treatment. Your mom or dad might take [diabetes medications](#), or they might use needles to inject insulin to lower the amount of sugar in their body. In addition, your mom or dad might have a [monitor or another device](#) to track the amount of sugar in their bodies.

Your parents will probably make many healthy changes to their lives. This can include losing weight, eating healthier foods, and getting more exercise. These are big changes for your mom or dad, so you can help by exercising and eating healthier, too!

A note for parents: Educating your children about [diabetes treatments](#) encourages teens and kids to become more self-sufficient. That means they will have the necessary tools and information to help others. For example, they'll know where and how to find [insulin injection spots](#) in case an adult with Type 2 Diabetes is in distress.

Diabetes education is important for kids!

Knowledge is power. Diabetes education extends beyond understanding the disease. Kids and teens can teach other kids how to manage or handle a person with Type 2 Diabetes. [Accurate health information is essential to saving lives and increasing awareness](#). Paying close attention to beneficial measures, such as encouraging exercise, sports, physical activity, proper weight, and being open to eating healthy foods can reduce the effects of diabetes. It can also make it easier for you to [stick to your diabetes diet](#).

Diabetes education benefits everyone. Teachable moments encourage a positive attitude and confident choices toward a healthy lifestyle at a young age—and this reduces the [risk factors for developing diabetes](#). Diabetes education and training demonstrate benefits to the community, the healthcare system, and your family.