**Preventing Type 2 diabetes**

Have you or a loved one been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes? If so, we’ve got the answers and support you need. More than half a billion people live with diabetes worldwide[[1]](#footnote-1) and, although it is a serious condition, it is also a manageable one.

Diabetes is defined by the World Health Organization as “a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces”. This can lead to hyperglycemia (high blood sugar levels) which, if you don’t control, can cause serious damage to the organs and functions in your body.

Type 2 diabetes, the more common type, is an insulin resistance, where the body’s cells do not respond properly to insulin. Over time, the pancreas may also lose the ability to produce enough insulin[[2]](#footnote-2). Type 2 diabetes is often linked to unhealthy lifestyle factors, like obesity.

**Take back control with 3 main pillars: exercise, healthy eating and medication.**

1. **Exercise**

It’s important to get regular physical activity to help improve insulin sensitivity and lower blood sugar levels. We recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week, like walking, swimming or cycling. You can break this into smaller ‘exercise snacks’ to best fit this into your daily routine.

**TOP TIP:** take part in a free, 5km Vitality parkrun every weekend.

Find your nearest venue here.

1. **Healthy eating**

Choose a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. Limit how much sugar and processed foods you eat as these can cause sharp spikes in blood sugar. If you are overweight or obese, losing even a small amount of weight can improve blood sugar control and reduce the risk of developing complications linked to diabetes.

**TOP TIP:** Interrogate the ingredient list.While grocery shopping, have a look at food labels to check the calories, carbs, fibre and fat counts. This info comes in handy when you’re cooking – and always stick to the recommended serving size.

1. **Medication**

People with Type 2 diabetes may need to take insulin injections or other medication to help manage their blood sugar levels. Make sure you chat to your doctor or diabetes educator about your treatment plan and stick to their recommendations.

**TOP TIP:** life can get busy so set reminders on your phone to check your blood sugar levels or take your medication when it’s needed. Even if you’re not experiencing any symptoms, you must adhere to your treatment plan.

Dr Deepak Patel, Clinician at Vitality South Africa, reiterates it’s important for those with diabetes to go for regular checkups and to monitor their blood sugar levels, which can easily be done with a glucometer purchased from your local clinic or pharmacy. “This will help you better understand how your body responds to different foods, physical activity and medications. With guidance from your doctor, you can then adjust these to best fit your lifestyle and needs so that the healthy changes become healthy habits”.

**Don’t forget your Vitality points**

Remember to complete your annual Vitality Health Check – a simple and convenient set of essential health screenings and preventative tests – for a healthier, happier you. Plus, you’ll earn Vitality points to move you up in reward status.

*For more information about Vitality’s evidence-based approach that encourages and rewards members for healthier living, visit the*[*Vitality Global*](https://www.vitalityglobal.com/)*website.*

1. IHME. Global diabetes cases to soar from 529 million in 2023 to 1.3 billion in 2050. [Link](https://www.healthdata.org/news-events/newsroom/news-releases/global-diabetes-cases-soar-529-million-13-billion-2050#:~:text=June%2022%2C%202023%20%E2%80%93%20More%20than,published%20today%20in%20The%20Lancet%20.) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CDC. Insulin resistance and diabetes. [Link](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/insulin-resistance.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)