November 14th is World Diabetes Day

World Diabetes Day is celebrated annually on November 14, a date proposed in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization . The date was chosen to commemorate the birth of Frederick Banting, a Nobel laureate in Physiology or Medicine who, along with his colleagues, discovered insulin.

The theme for World Diabetes Day 2026 is "Diabetes and Well-Being" (for the period 2024–2026). This theme emphasizes the importance of access to quality treatment, education, and support to improve the physical and mental health of people living with diabetes.

According to the WHO, over three decades (from 1990 to 2022), the number of people with diabetes has more than quadrupled, from 200 million to 830 million. Among adults over 18, the prevalence has increased from 7% to 14%.

The disease is among the leading causes of vision loss (blindness), kidney failure, heart attacks, strokes, and lower limb amputations. Diabetes and its complications claim the lives of more than two million people annually.

In Belarus, over 300,000 patients with diabetes are registered, of which approximately 284,000 have type 2 diabetes and over 17,000 have type 1 diabetes.

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic endocrine disease in which glucose absorption is impaired due to a deficiency of the hormone insulin or its ineffective action, leading to persistently elevated blood glucose levels.

The main types of diabetes :

Type 1 (insulin-dependent): the pancreas produces almost no insulin due to the destruction of its cells; it often appears at a young age and requires constant injections of the hormone.

Type 2: The body produces insulin, but cells lose sensitivity to it . It develops more often after 40 years associated with excess weight .

Gestational : hyperglycemia first detected during pregnancy (usually in the second or third trimester) that did not meet the criteria for overt diabetes mellitus before conception.

Hybrid forms and other specific types of diabetes .

Main symptoms:

* The classic triad: **polyuria** (frequent urination), **polydipsia** (unquenchable thirst) and **polyphagia** (increased appetite) with simultaneous weight loss.

* Specific metabolic signs: the presence of acetone in the urine (ketonuria), the smell of acetone from the mouth, indicating lipolysis and protein catabolism .

* Early systemic manifestations: dry skin and mucous membranes, itching (especially in the perineum), muscle weakness, headache, sleep disturbance and irritability.

* Microvascular and infectious complications: poor wound healing, tendency to pyoderma, furunculosis, fungal infections of the skin and mucous membranes (mycoses), frequent urinary tract infections.

Risk factors :

- ✓ Age.
- ✓ Heredity.
- ✓ Ethnicity.
- ✓ Overweight and obesity.
- ✓ Sedentary lifestyle.
- ✓ Unbalanced diet.
- ✓ Arterial hypertension.
- ✓ Lipid metabolism disorder.
- ✓ Smoking and drinking alcohol .

Prevention

Diet. Eliminate sugar. Minimize sugary drinks, baked goods, and foods with added sugar. Eat fiber. Add more whole grains, fresh vegetables, and greens to your diet. Choose healthy fats. Replace animal fats with vegetable oils, nuts, and fish.

Physical activity. Move more. Do at least 150 minutes of exercise (walking, swimming, running) per week. Avoid a sedentary lifestyle. Take stretching breaks every hour if you have a sedentary job.

Weight and health management. Monitor your weight. A gradual weight loss of 5–7% if you're overweight significantly reduces your risk of illness.

Get your blood tested. Get your fasting glucose and glycated hemoglobin levels tested during medical examinations, especially if you have a family history of these conditions.

Give up bad habits. Smoking and alcohol impair metabolism and increase the risk of vascular disease.

Treatment

Type 1 diabetes mellitus: requires lifelong insulin administration, as the body does not produce its own hormone.

Type 2 diabetes: Treated with lifestyle changes, weight loss, and special tablets that lower blood glucose levels. In some cases, insulin is also needed.

Interesting facts

- On November 14, World Diabetes Day, many famous buildings are illuminated. blue. For example, such as the London Eye, the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro , and the Sydney Opera House , located in Australia.

- The highest sugar level was recorded in March 2008 in an American Patrick Buonocore , admitted to hospital with blood sugar of 147.6 mmol. This got into the Guinness Book of Records.
- The word "insulin" comes from the Latin " insula ", meaning "island". Because The production of insulin is usually the responsibility of the islet cells located in pancreas, which was first described by a German scientist in 1869 Paul Langerhans .

Diabetes is not a death sentence! "Diabetes is not a limitation, it's just a different way of taking care of yourself." "If life isn't sweet, it's because it's protecting you from diabetes."

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