Type 2 diabetes does not turn into type 1 diabetes. People with type 2 diabetes may also need to use insulin as their condition progresses. However, this does not mean they have type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is not the same as type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition that is not related to lifestyle or being overweight. It is known that you need to have certain genes to develop type 1 diabetes, but not everyone with these genes develops type 1 diabetes. It also needs to be triggered by something in the environment. 10–15% of all people with diabetes have type 1.

Type 2 diabetes can often be prevented or delayed through healthy eating and physical activity. People with type 2 diabetes may also need to use insulin as their condition progresses. However, this does not mean they have type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is not just a childhood condition. Most people with type 1 are diagnosed under the age of 30 years. However, type 1 diabetes can occur at any age. Also remember that children with type 1 grow up and become adults with type 1.

There is no cure for type 1 diabetes... yet. But there is lots of research looking at the causes and prevention of type 1 diabetes. Researchers in Australia are studying environmental factors that could be causing type 1 diabetes. They are also trialling different medications to try to prevent its onset.

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed through healthy eating and physical activity. People with type 2 diabetes may produce some insulin but not enough and/or their body may not use it properly. People with type 1 diabetes can’t make any insulin at all.

Diabetes Victoria works to support, empower and campaign for all Victorians affected by, or at risk of diabetes:

diabetesvic.org.au  1300 136 588
mail@diabetesvic.org.au

This information card was developed together with a group of adults with type 1 diabetes in 2009. We thank them for their valuable ideas and input.
I need insulin every day
People with type 1 diabetes do not make any of their own insulin. We cannot live without insulin as it must be injected, usually 2–4 times a day with a syringe or insulin pen, or given by an insulin pump.

I can eat what everyone else can eat
There is no such thing as a ‘diabetic diet’. Just like everyone else I need a healthy, balanced diet. I can eat foods high in sugar and fat occasionally.

Sometimes I have a ‘hypo’
Hypoglycaemia or ‘hypo’ is when the blood glucose (sugar) level is too low – less than 4.0mmol/L. This may happen if I have exercised more than usual, delayed or missed a meal or had too much insulin.

After that I may need a snack, such as a piece of fruit or a sandwich, to make sure my blood glucose level does not drop again. If I am unconscious, do not give me anything to eat or drink. Call an ambulance on 000 straight away and tell them it is a ‘diabetes emergency’.

Diabetes do’s and don’ts
DON’T offer me unwelcome advice about food and exercise.
DO offer your encouragement and emotional support. Living with diabetes is sometimes stressful, scary and tiring.

DON’T count me out just because I have diabetes. I can do almost everything anyone else can.

Diabetes
Mehr, brita’/n, n.
Type 1 diabetes is an immunological condition. This means that the body’s immune system destroys the cells in the pancreas which make insulin. Insulin helps the body to move glucose (sugar) from the bloodstream into cells for energy. Without insulin, blood glucose levels are too high. Type 1 diabetes often begins in childhood or early adulthood but can occur at any age.

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