

What is diabetes? How does it affect older adults?

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects how the body transforms food into energy, and it's estimated that 33% of adults aged 65 years or older have diabetes.

Imagine that your cells are like locked doors. Glucose, or sugar from the food we eat, doesn't have a way to get in on its own, as shown in **Figure One**. Insulin acts as a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells where it can be used as energy, as shown in **Figure Two**.

If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use it as well as it should, and that causes too much sugar to stay in your bloodstream. Over time, this can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss, kidney disease and more.

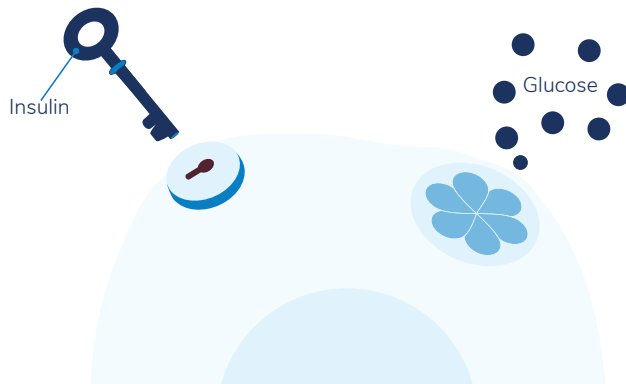


Figure One



Figure Two

Types of Diabetes

- **Type 1 diabetes** is when the body does not produce enough insulin. It's possible for older adults to develop this type of diabetes, but it begins most often in children and young adults, who then have diabetes for life.
- **Type 2 diabetes** is the most common type of diabetes. It occurs when the body does not use insulin properly, creating an insulin resistance. As a result, blood sugar levels can become too high. Type 2 diabetes can be managed through a combination of lifestyle changes, such as diet, exercise and medication.

Currently there is no cure for diabetes, but there are steps you can take to help:

- Eat healthy food.
- Stay active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Take medicine as prescribed.
- Get diabetes self-management education and support.
- Make and keep health care appointments.

Prediabetes = Preventable diabetes

When a person's glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be considered diabetic, they have prediabetes. Fortunately, you can often stop prediabetes from becoming type 2 diabetes with diet and lifestyle changes.

Have questions about diabetes care? Your CorsoCare team is here for you — or visit CorsoCare.com to learn more.