

# PHAN

## FACT SHEET

### Quick Guide to Type 2 Diabetes in Youth

**Risk** - Type 2 diabetes is on the rise in American kids, especially African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Your child may be at risk if he/she is in one of these groups, overweight, inactive, or has a family history of diabetes.

**Warning Signs** - Keep an eye out for the following warning signs of type 2 diabetes:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Increased appetite
- Blurry vision
- Sudden weight loss
- Exhaustion

**Prevention** - There are things you can do to help prevent type 2 diabetes:

- Encourage exercise and active play
- Limit time for television and video games
- Plan healthy, low fat meals
- Watch the portions your child eats
- Never tell a child to "Clean your plate!"

### First Things First

Type 2 diabetes is the kind usually in older people. But these days, more and more kids and teens are getting it, too. Until someone discovers a cure for diabetes, you and your health care team will work to keep your blood sugar levels as close as possible to your target range. You'll do this by balancing food, medicine, and activity. Read on to find out how:

**Food & Losing Weight** - You may be overweight. If so, losing weight will be an important part of your diabetes care plan. You and your health care team will work together to build a diabetes plan that lets you be the boss of your diabetes. You are in control. Even if you're not overweight, your plan will help you balance food, activities, and sometimes medicine.

**Physical Activity** - The more calories you burn up, the better your body uses insulin, and the more often your blood sugar will be in your target range. You don't have to start running marathons. But do make sure you do something active every day. It can be shooting hoops, mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, hacky sack, anything that raises your heartbeat for 20 minutes or more. Watching TV, spending hours at the computer, playing video games, and hanging out with friends don't count as exercise. Talk with your health care team about the things you like to do and make sure those activities are part of your diabetes plan.

**Medication** - Your doctor may give you diabetes medicine to help you feel better and keep your blood sugars within your target range. Be sure to ask how and when to take the medicine, and how much to take. You should also know how the medicine works, whether there are any side effects, and when you should report side effects to your doctor. Your doctor may have you take insulin shots for a while to get your blood sugars back to where they should be. Some people can control type 2 diabetes without medicine. Losing weight and following your diabetes plan will help.

### What Is This Dark Skin Patch?

Lots of people who have type 2 diabetes have "insulin resistance." That means that their body is making insulin but can't use it. So the insulin builds up and as a result, you may get a dark area of skin around your neck or in your armpit. It's called acanthosis nigricans (AAY-can-THO-sis NIG-ruh-cans), or "A.N."

Almost 75% of kids with type 2 diabetes have AN, so you're not alone. But it can be embarrassing. Some people call it "dirty neck" and try scrubbing it or even using bleach to get rid of it. These don't work, though, so spare yourself the bleaching. The good news is that taking control over your diabetes—eating well, being active, losing some weight, and taking your diabetes medicine—lowers the amount of unused insulin in your body. This will help get rid of AN.

### **Am I the Only One?**

Diabetes can make you feel very alone. You may be the only person you know who has it. But you are not alone. 18.2 million people in the United States have diabetes. And most of them have type 2. There are Olympic athletes, sports stars, famous actors, and people doing just about everything else, all with diabetes.

It may help to meet someone else your age with diabetes. Your local American Diabetes Association office can help. The folks there can tell you about different group activities. You can join a walk or bike ride that raises money to find the cure for diabetes. For many kids, the highlight of the year is getting away to a summer camp set up just for kids with diabetes. (It's a great way to prove to your parents that you're learning to take care of yourself.) To find your local ADA office and learn more about ADA activities in your area call 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383).

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<insert PHAN or Local Health Department info>