

# WHAT IS DIABETES?

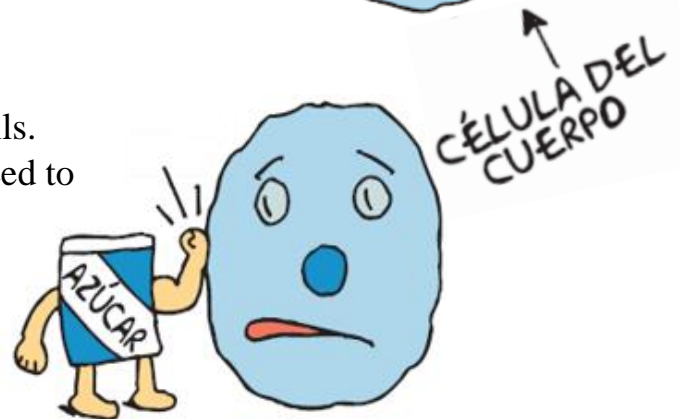
Diabetes means you have too much sugar in your blood. High blood sugar problems start when your body no longer makes enough of a chemical, or hormone, called insulin.



Your body changes much of the food you eat into a type of sugar called glucose. This sugar travels in your blood to all the cells in your body. Your body cells need the sugar to give you energy.



Insulin helps sugar move from your blood into your cells. Without insulin, your cells cannot get the sugar they need to keep you healthy.



By moving sugar from your blood to your body's cells, insulin helps to keep your blood sugar level normal (not too high; not too low). When you do not have enough insulin to lower high blood sugar levels, you have diabetes.

No one knows what causes diabetes. You cannot catch diabetes and you cannot give it to someone else.

Diabetes can, and must, be treated. High blood sugar levels can cause serious health problems.

A simple test can tell you if you have diabetes. Talk to your doctor or health clinic for more information.

