

## Diabetes - The Sweet Blood Disease & its side effects

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects the process our body employs to convert food into energy. It can occur when the body cannot produce adequate insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. There are three main types of Diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes.



### Type 1 Diabetes

Earlier known as the juvenile-onset or insulin-dependent, autoimmune disease is characterized by deficient insulin production and requires daily administration of insulin.

### Type 2 Diabetes

This is the most prevalent type of diabetes which is characterized by resistance to insulin by the body or when the pancreas cannot produce enough insulin to overcome the resistance. This type can usually be managed through proper diet, medication and physical activity.

### Gestational Diabetes

Hyperglycemia (raised blood glucose) with blood glucose values above normal but below the diagnosis of diabetes that occurs in pregnant women. It usually goes away after the baby is born, but it can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

What one suffering from 'Madhumeha' should know?

'Madhumeha' - the term Madhu means sweet, right? But it is not as pleasant as it sounds. The actual meaning is 'sweet urine' as mentioned in the ancient text, Sushruta Samhita (6th C BCE).

As the term goes, it is the increased blood sugar or glucose level that in turn leads to increased glucose content in the excreted urine.

Every disease comes with its own set of side effects. Likewise, Diabetes can impact many parts of our body, including the heart, kidneys, feet and eyes.

Let's see some of the most concerning side effects of Diabetes.

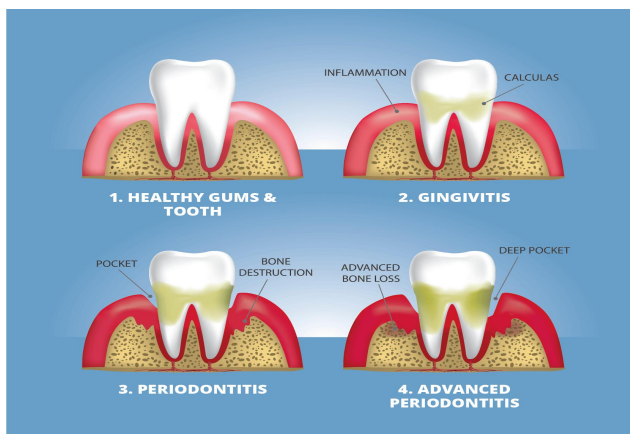
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## 1) Hypertension



Also known as high blood pressure, it is one of the most common side effects of diabetes. This is because the pancreas of the person affected with type 2 diabetes will produce insulin in a lesser amount than required by the body. This further leads to improper breaking down of food or metabolic activity which in turn results in a rise in low-density cholesterol (LDL). Insulin resistance can also result in a narrowing and hardening of blood vessels to cause hypertension.

## 2) Gum issues



According to a general understanding, any person with ailments possesses a weak immune system which is not an exception in the case of diabetes. Curing wounds takes much time and medication. When diabetes is not controlled, the high glucose level in the saliva helps harmful bacteria grow which in turn causes gum inflammation and decay of cells around the teeth causing sudden and unexpected loss of teeth.

## 3) Hearing problems



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Diabetes is a chronic disease that has to be given proper attention. It can damage the blood vessels as well as the nerves inside the ear, impairing hearing. High diabetic conditions may lead to loss of hearing. The only way to prevent these complications is by maintaining the blood glucose level, properly balanced diet, and exercising.

### 4) Vision Impairment



Diabetes causes two types of eye disorders - Diabetic Retinopathy and Diabetic muscular edema (DME). The former causes vision impairment while the latter develops swelling around the retina. It should also be noted that Diabetic retinopathy doesn't usually show any symptoms in the early stage. A regular dilated eye examination once a year can limit the damage caused.

### 5) Foot ulcers



It is a common side effect in those with the 1 and type 2 diabetes. It is a known fact that due to a weak immune system, the wounds heal slowly. The non-healing wounds form on the bottom or side of a person's foot, often causing inflammation and infection. If proper attention is not given, there are chances of severe complications including amputation.

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### 6) Brain health issues



It appears that diabetes causes certain abnormalities in blood flow control to the brain. This is associated with a rapid loss of mental function with age - performing tasks, and the ability to organize, prioritize and pay attention.

### 7) Sexual dysfunction



The amount of blood flow to the sexual organs is restricted by the damage caused to blood vessels and nerves due to Diabetes. It induces urinary tract infections and loss of sensation in women. Men with Diabetes will experience some level of erectile dysfunction in their lifetime.

### 8) Skin infections

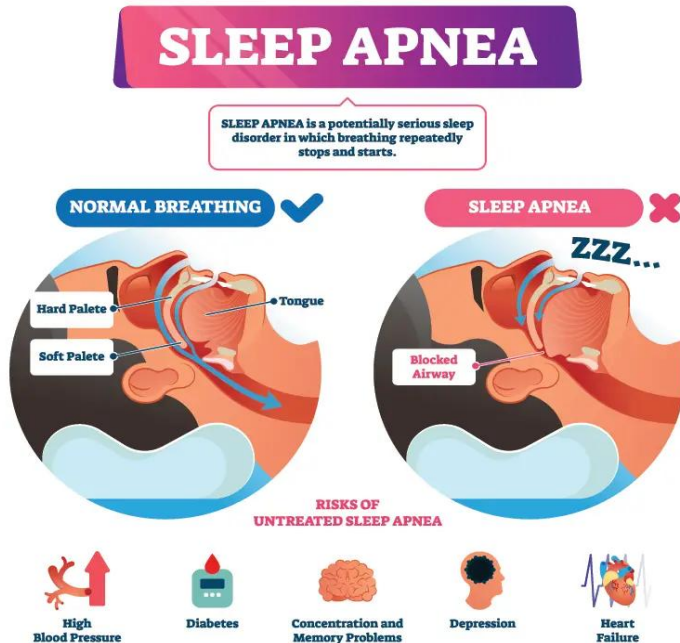


Sclerosis is a common complication of poorly controlled or severe diabetes.

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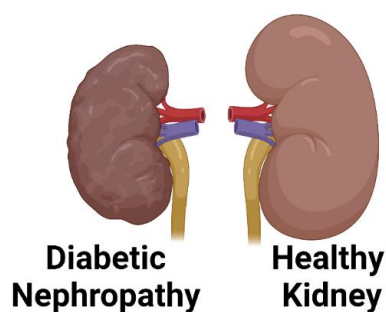
Diabetes increases the risk for all kinds of skin problems, including fungal and bacterial infections. Yeast infections are so common among persons with diabetes. Skin infection can be attributed to obesity because of the moist surfaces between skin folds that may breed bacteria and fungi. Checking Obesity in Persons diagnosed with Diabetes is a necessity to avoid complications.

### 9) Sleep Apnea



There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between sleep apnea and type 2 diabetes. Sleep apnea deprives the body of oxygen. When this happens, there's an increase in carbon dioxide in the blood. This leads to insulin resistance so that the body doesn't use insulin effectively ultimately increasing the sugar in the bloodstream.

### 10) Kidney failure



We know diabetes is a chronic disease. Over time, the high blood sugar levels thicken and scar the nephrons - (the functional units that filter the blood) making it harder to clear extra fluid and waste from the body. This is also called diabetic neuropathy or the kidney disease

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### **How to prevent or delay complications?**

We should understand that side effects are inevitable and they are a part and parcel of Diabetes. While one can continue medication, lifestyle changes serve healthy living.

- Regular monitoring of blood sugar, blood fats, and blood pressure will help to reduce the risk of developing complications
- Regular health checks
- Eating a healthy and a balanced diet
- Ensure regular physical activity
- Quit smoking and alcohol
- Getting enough sleep
- Regular eye check-ups
- Treating dental problems right away