



**PLATINUM
HEALTH**

14 November is World Diabetes Day!

World Diabetes Day (WDD) is the world's largest diabetes awareness campaign reaching a global audience of over 1 billion people in over 160 countries. It is marked every year on 14 November, the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922.

This year's theme, "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps," underpins Platinum Health's commitment to reducing your risk of diabetes and ensuring that all our members who are diagnosed with diabetes have access to equitable, comprehensive, affordable and quality treatment and care.

What is Diabetes?

- Diabetes is a chronic, metabolic disease characterised by elevated levels of blood glucose (or blood sugar), which leads over time to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys and nerves.
- The most common is type 2 diabetes, usually in adults, which occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't make enough insulin. In the past 3 decades the frequency of type 2 diabetes has risen dramatically.
- Type 1 diabetes, once known as juvenile diabetes or insulin-dependent diabetes, is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin by itself.

For people living with diabetes, access to affordable treatment, including insulin, is critical to their survival.



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Know your risk

- Type 2 diabetes, which accounts for over 90% of all diabetes, often develops silently, with symptoms that go unnoticed.
- As a result, many people with the condition are not diagnosed early, and according to research done by the International Diabetes Federation, one or more complications are already present, without the person knowing it.
- Diabetes-related complications can be serious and potentially life-threatening. They include damage to the heart, eyes, kidneys, brain and feet. The risk of complications places significant stress on people living with diabetes.

I have diabetes – what does it mean?

- If you suffer from diabetes, it means that there is too much glucose (sugar) in your bloodstream.
- This happens because a hormone that helps the body absorb and use energy, insulin, is not released or doesn't work properly.

The good news is that you can manage diabetes by making various lifestyle changes. Here are ways to keep your blood sugar level stable:

- **Eat small, regular meals**

Regular meals spread evenly throughout the day will ensure that you have a consistent source of energy, which will prevent you feeling fatigued. It will also make you feel less hungry less often, thereby reducing the number of kilojoules you absorb and helping to control your weight.



- **Increase your fibre intake**

Fibre helps promote a slow but sure rise in your blood sugar level, as it slows sugar absorption and carb digestion. Foods high in fibre include wholegrain bread and oats, pears and oranges, broccoli and sweetcorn, and potatoes with the skin.

- **Drink lots of water**

Drinking enough water not only prevent hydration, but also helps your kidneys flush out any excess sugar in the body through urine. Make drinking water more enjoyable by infusing a jug of water with blueberries and oranges, lemon and mint, or strawberry and basil!

- **Give up the refined sugars**

Stop the sugar-filled sweets, snacks and nibbles! We know cutting out sugar can be really hard at the beginning, so small practical swaps are a good starting point when you're trying to cut down on excess sugar. Swapping sugary drinks, energy drinks and fruit juices with water, plain milk, or tea and coffee without sugar can be a good start. Cutting out these added sugars can help you manage your blood glucose levels and help you manage your weight. Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks where possible, as these will raise your blood glucose level, drive up your weight gain and increase your risk of diabetes. You can even hot or iced teas.



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- **Change your lifestyle!**

Stop smoking, exercise regularly, drink lots of water and reduce alcohol consumption.

Doing our part to keeping you healthy!

The fact of the matter is that regular sugar testing remains the most accurate method to monitor your blood sugar level and prevent you from developing medical complications in life.

It is for this reason that all our medical scheme plans cover routine screening tests such as blood pressure, cholesterol, body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure measurement.

Don't wait, get screened today!