

You're here because you have questions. You're following the diabetes game plan recommended by your healthcare team, however your blood sugar levels are still not in the target range.

Well, you're certainly not alone, and it's probably not anything you're doing wrong. Let's find out how diabetes changes over time.

Diabetes is a condition in which you have higher than normal levels of blood sugar. To understand how this happens, we first need to know how sugar normally works in the body.

Sugar is your body's main source of energy, which it mostly gets from the food you eat. It's the fuel that keeps your body running.

After a meal, sugar is absorbed into the blood and transported to every organ and cell in the body. Yup, even those ones.

This is pretty important stuff, and therefore the amount of sugar in the blood must be tightly monitored and controlled. The pancreas, right there, has special cells known as beta cells which play an important role in this process.

Beta cells are responsible for making insulin. Insulin is a key hormone that travels around the body and, under normal conditions, controls the amount of sugar in the blood. Insulin helps move sugar into the cells of your body for their everyday energy needs. Any extra sugar is stored in your liver and muscles for another time.

Okay, so now let's find out what's happening in type-2 diabetes and why your medication may need to change over time. There are a couple of things that could be happening. The cells in your body may be less responsive to insulin, or your beta cells may not be making enough insulin. Let's talk about these.

If the cells of your body are less responsive to insulin, it is harder for them to absorb sugar from the bloodstream. So, even though insulin is being produced normally, your cells aren't listening. Therefore, sugar starts to build up in your blood. Your body notices that sugar levels are rising, and tells your beta cells to deliver more insulin back into the blood.

As you can imagine, it's a lot of effort making all this insulin, so your pancreas recruits more beta cells to keep up with demand. Usually, this is enough to make up for your less responsive cells; in fact, many people will never even notice this has happened.

In diabetes, however, your blood sugar levels continue to rise despite your beta cells trying their best. You've probably noticed this in your blood tests. Eventually, beta cells become less effective at producing insulin and just can't keep up with the increased demand. They may even start to decrease in number as time goes on, and therefore make less insulin than your body needs. As a result, your blood sugar levels may continue to rise.

This is why you may find that your blood sugar is harder to manage over time. Your cells aren't responding to insulin like they should and your beta cells are making less and less insulin.

So, even though you're taking your medication and following all of your doctor's recommendations, these changes may continue to occur. Simply put, your body is changing; it may not be something you did wrong at all.

As your diabetes changes, your doctor may talk to you about adjusting your treatment. Your doctor might recommend changing or adding additional medications. This is because different diabetes medications work in different ways to help your body as it changes. Sure it's a challenge, but it's manageable. With a proper diet, exercise, and treatment, and the help of your healthcare team, you can continue to control your diabetes.

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