

DIABETES, HYPERTENSION AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)



DIABETES



What is type 2 diabetes? Type 2 diabetes is a chronic disease where elevated blood sugar is one of the symptoms. Type 2 diabetes is found in all age groups but the risk increases with age. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in Greenland. The disease often occurs in a combination of inheritance and way of life. Lifestyle factors such as reduced physical activity and overweight increases the risk of type 2 diabetes.

What is the cause of diabetes? The pancreas produces insulin, which is a hormone. Insulin helps bringing sugars from the bloodstream in to the cells where it is transformed to energy. When you have type 2 diabetes, the body does not utilize the insulin you produce. This means that the sugars do not enter the cells, but instead stay in the bloodstream, where it among other things causes elevated blood sugar.

When should you be checked? If you have symptoms like fatigue, weight loss, thirst, nausea, frequent urination, frequent infections, sensory and visual disturbances. It is also a good idea to get tested if you are overweight, have had gestational diabetes, or your close family members have diabetes.

How is type 2 diabetes diagnosed?

With a blood test that determines your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months.

Which complications are the most common with type 2 diabetes?

If your blood sugar is too high for a long time, your nerves and blood vessels may be damaged. This may result in problems with your vision, kidney damage, sensory impairment, and reduced blood circulation with an increased risk of blood clots in heart and brain.

What can you do yourself? Smoking increases the risk of complications. In case of overweight, physical activity, a healthy diet and weight loss are important parts of the treatment, and may reduce the need for medical treatment. Physical activity has a great effect on the regulation of blood sugar and helps the prevention of complications.

What is the medical treatment? Most patients with type 2 diabetes are given medication. Most often, you will be given medications that lower your blood sugar, your blood pressure and your cholesterol levels.

Diabetes status: The frequency at which patients need to be checked up medically varies but at least once per year. Blood and urine tests and blood pressure should be checked every year. In addition, a foot examination is offered annually as well as eye examination approximately every 2 years. The checkups prevent the diabetes from becoming worse and may help avoid or postpone complications.



HYPERTENSION (High blood pressure)

What is hypertension? You suffer from hypertension if your resting blood pressure is higher than 135/85. It is important that the blood pressure is measured at home in familiar surroundings and over several days. Blood pressure is a measure of what force the heart uses to pump blood around the body and how much resistance there is in the blood vessels.

What are the reasons for hypertension? The cause of hypertension is often unknown but it may be hereditary. Hypertension is often seen with other cardiovascular diseases, overweight, diabetes, high consumption of alcohol etc.



When should you be checked? In most cases, people with hypertension have no symptoms. If the blood pressure is very high, patients experience faintness, headache, heart palpitations, or shortness of breath. It is recommended that everyone over the age of 40 knows their blood pressure.

How is hypertension diagnosed? The diagnose is reached by measuring your blood pressure for three days at home while at rest. If the blood pressure is above 135/85, it is too high, and you need to contact your local health care center.

What can you do yourself? Avoid smoking, be physically active, limit your intake of salt, alcohol, and liquorice. Try to lose weight if you are overweight.

What is the treatment? You can lower the risk of complications associated with high blood pressure by changing lifestyle and getting medication that lowers the blood pressure. Complications might be heart attack, stroke or kidney disease.

Blood pressure status: We recommend that you measure your blood pressure at home for 3 days once a year, unless otherwise instructed.



CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)

What is COPD (KOL in Danish)? COPD is a chronic disease in the lungs where the lung tissue slowly damaged, which results in increasing shortness of breath.

What are the reasons for COPD? The most common cause is smoking but can also be caused by hereditary and other environmental factors.

When should you be checked?

- If you are a smoker
- If you have symptoms like shortness of breath, cough with mucus from the lungs or frequent lung infections

How is COPD diagnosed? The diagnose is made by a measurement of lung function. The measurement is done by breathing out the air as quickly and for as long as possible. The result is used to find out if there is COPD and possibly to what extent you have the disease.

What can you do yourself? Avoid smoking. Be physically active. On the website www.min.medicin.dk there are short film clips that show how to take your inhalation medicine correctly. If you are diagnosed with COPD, you are more likely to get pneumonia, which can worsen your COPD. Therefore, the flu vaccine is recommended every year, as well as vaccine against pneumonia.

What is the treatment? Smoking cessation is the main treatment for COPD. Physical activity is an equally important part of treatment to maintain lung function.

If you have the diagnosis COPD you will be treated with inhalation medicine which dampens the irritation and expands the narrowed airways. Inhalation medicine prevents a deterioration of the condition. Some may benefit from expectorant medications.

In case of an acute deterioration of COPD you may need a short-term treatment with antibiotics and corticosteroids.

COPD status: If you have COPD, it is important to come for check-ups once a year.

STOP SMOKING

If you want help with smoking cessation - contact Inuunerissaavik Steno during phone hours.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Book an appointment

- Phone 34 43 33 weekdays 9:00-10:00 AM
- www.doktor.gl (Select the desired consultation)

Remember to cancel appointments if you are unable to make it.

- 34 43 33 (weekdays 9:00-10:00 AM)
- www.doktor.gl (Select: "Aflysning af tid")
- 34 44 00



Get your blood drawn at the laboratory weekdays 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Sincerely

Inuunerissaavik Steno Kalaallit Nunaat
Steno Diabetes Center Greenland



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