

# Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes:

## HEALTH RISKS TO KNOW

### Heart and Blood Vessel Risks



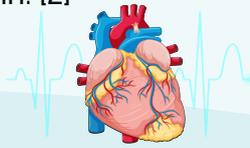
#### Why These Risks Are Especially Important for Indian Adults

India has one of the largest diabetes populations in the world — 72 million people in 2021, expected to reach 125 million by 2045. [1] When diabetes comes with excess weight, heart and blood vessel risks rise significantly. Indian people tend to develop these problems at a younger age and at lower body weights than people of European origin. [2]



#### Heart Disease

High blood sugar damages blood vessel walls over time, making them stiff and more likely to block. Belly fat triggers inflammation and speeds up fatty build-up inside arteries — the key processes that lead to heart attacks. Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death among people with diabetes in India. [2]



#### High Blood Pressure

Excess weight forces the heart to work harder and raises pressure inside blood vessels. Together, high blood sugar and high blood pressure quietly damage blood vessels throughout the body over many years, often without any warning signs. [3]



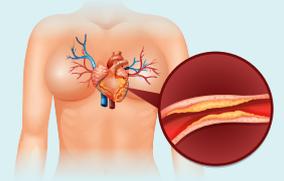
#### Stroke

High blood sugar damages small blood vessels in the brain. High blood pressure is more common in people who are overweight hence makes stroke risk even greater. In Indian adults, a BMI of 23 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or above is considered overweight. [3]



#### Abnormal Cholesterol

Many people with diabetes have high bad cholesterol (LDL) and triglycerides, and low good cholesterol (HDL). This combination is especially common in Indian people with diabetes and accelerates fatty build-up in blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke. [4]



**Note:** Do you know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers? Ask your doctor to check them at your next visit. The 2025 American Diabetes Association (ADA) guidelines recommend cardiovascular risk checks for all people with T2D every year.

#### References

1. Anjana RM, et al. Metabolic non-communicable disease health report of India: ICMR-INDIAB study. *S Afr Med J.* 2023;113(2):23–43.
2. Mohan V. Lessons learned from epidemiology of type 2 diabetes in South Asians: Kelly West Award Lecture 2024. *Diabetes Care.* 2025;48(2):153–163.
3. American Diabetes Association. Cardiovascular disease and risk management: Standards of Care in Diabetes—2025. *Diabetes Care.* 2025;48(Suppl 1):S207–S238.
4. Kanaya AM. Diabetes in South Asians: Uncovering novel risk factors: Kelly West Award Lecture 2023. *Diabetes Care.* 2024;47(1):7–16.

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# How Diabetes and Excess Weight Affect Your Organs

## Damage That Often Develops Without Any Warning Signs

When blood sugar stays high especially combined with excess weight, it can slowly damage organs throughout the body, often without any symptoms early on. Regular check-ups are essential. [1]

### Eyes: Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy damages the tiny blood vessels at the back of the eye and is one of the leading causes of blindness in Indian adults. About 1 in 6 people with diabetes in India has retinopathy. [2] Many have no early symptoms. Do not wait for blurry vision to get an annual eye exam.

### Kidneys: Diabetic Nephropathy

Diabetes is a leading cause of kidney disease in India. About 1 in 4 people with T2D in urban South India had early kidney damage. [3] Obesity and high blood pressure speed this up. A simple urine test can catch kidney problems early, before they become serious.

### Nerves : Diabetic Neuropathy

Nerve damage is the most commonly reported complication of diabetes in India. [4] It most often causes numbness, tingling, or pain in the feet and hands. When sensation is lost, small wounds can go unnoticed and become serious infections. Check your feet every day.

### Liver : Fatty Liver Disease

Fatty liver disease is very common in Indian people with diabetes and excess weight. It is closely linked to insulin resistance and can silently worsen over time. Losing just 5–10% of body weight can significantly improve liver health. [1]

## Note: Have you had these check-ups this year?

- ◆ Eye exam
- ◆ Urine test (kidneys)
- ◆ Liver function test
- ◆ Foot examination
- ◆ HbA1c

Bring this list to your next appointment.

#### References

- American Diabetes Association. Comprehensive medical evaluation and assessment of comorbidities: Standards of Care in Diabetes—2025. *Diabetes Care*. 2025;48(Suppl 1):S59–S85.
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# Mental Health and What You Can Do

## Living With Diabetes Affects More Than Just Your Body

Living with diabetes is not just a physical challenge; it affects your emotions, too. This is very common and nothing to be ashamed of. Recognising how you feel is the first step to getting the right support. [1]

## Feeling Low or Depressed

The daily demands of managing blood sugar, diet, and medication can weigh heavily on mental health. A study among over 2,700 people with T2D in India found that 1 in 5 had signs of depression and 1 in 6 had anxiety. [2] When someone feels low, they are less likely to take medicines or eat well making diabetes harder to control.

## Feeling Worried or Anxious

Worrying about low blood sugar, diet, or complications is very common. A study from eastern India found depressive symptoms in about 4 in 10 people with diabetes compared to 1 in 8 without diabetes. [3] If you feel anxious or overwhelmed, tell your doctor. It is a medical issue, just like high blood sugar.

## Diabetes Burnout

Managing diabetes every day, medicines, food, and blood sugar checks, can feel like too much. This is called diabetes burnout, and it is very real. The 2025 ADA guidelines recommend that all people with T2D be asked about their emotional well-being at every visit. [1]

## How Have You Been Feeling Lately?

- In control and managing well.
- Tired and finding it hard to keep up.
- Worried or anxious most of the time.
- Feeling low or sad.

**Share whatever applies to you with your doctor or nurse. You do not have to manage this alone.**

**Note:** Do you know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers? Ask your doctor to check them at your next visit. The 2025 American Diabetes Association (ADA) guidelines recommend cardiovascular risk checks for all people with T2D every year.

### References

1. American Diabetes Association. Facilitating positive health behaviors and well-being: Standards of Care in Diabetes—2025. *Diabetes Care*. 2025;48(Suppl 1):S86–S127.
2. Tripathi P, et al. Prevalence and predictors of anxiety and depression in Indian patients with T2D. *Ann Indian Acad Neurol*. 2024. doi:10.1177/09727531241244569.
3. Karpha K, et al. Factors affecting depression and anxiety in diabetic patients: cross-sectional study from eastern India.

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