

Impaired glucose tolerance and Impaired fasting glucose

Australia is currently facing an epidemic of diabetes. A recent study has shown that nearly one in four adults over the age of 25 years either has diabetes or is at risk of developing it. For this reason your doctor can perform a series of tests on your blood. This can detect either Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT) or Impaired Fasting Glucose (IFG) or diabetes.

Impaired glucose tolerance

Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT) is a condition that occurs when the blood glucose level is higher than normal but not to the level to be diagnosed as diabetes. There are often no symptoms associated with IGT. Diagnosis can only be made after an Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT). This test involves having your blood tested when fasting and again two hours after drinking a concentrated glucose drink.

IGT most commonly occurs in people who are overweight and physically inactive. In particular, people who carry excess weight around the waistline are at the greatest risk. IGT is a result of insulin not working effectively. This is known as insulin resistance. This is also the problem with type 2 diabetes.

Impaired fasting glucose

Impaired fasting glucose (IFG) is another category that identifies blood glucose levels which are higher than normal, but not in the diabetes range. IFG occurs less frequently than IGT, and has been associated with lower levels of insulin rather than insulin resistance.

Who is at risk of type 2 diabetes?

IFG/IGT increases your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. **Only one in three people** with IFG/IGT develop Type 2 diabetes within 10 years of diagnosis. Research has shown that IFG/IGT also increases the incidence of cardiovascular disease (heart and blood vessels), which can lead to heart attack and stroke. High blood pressure and elevated blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) are also more common in people with IGT.

The following all put you at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes:

- Over 55 years of age
- Over 45 years of age and have an immediate family member with type 2 diabetes
- Over 45 years of age and have high blood pressure
- Over 45 years of age and overweight
- Over 35 years of age and from an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Pacific Island, Indian sub-continent or Chinese cultural background
- Have impaired fasting glucose (IFG) or impaired glucose intolerance (IGT)
- Have heart disease or have had a heart attack
- Have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- Have polycystic ovarian syndrome and are overweight

The good news is that by making some changes to their lifestyle, two out of three people 'at risk' will be able to prevent or delay developing type 2 diabetes.

IGT, IFG and good health

What can you do to reduce your risk of both Type 2 diabetes and heart disease?

Physical activity:

Try to participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all days of the week

If you are trying to lose weight or prevent weight gain, you may need to aim for 60 to 90 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week.



Nutrition:

Try to follow a healthy eating plan:

- Choose to eat foods that are low in fat, particularly saturated fat
- Include a wide variety of carbohydrate foods, particularly those that are high fibre and low glycemic index
- Eat only small amounts of foods that provide you with lots of 'empty energy' (lots of kilojoules but no other nutrients) e.g. lollies, cool drink.

Body fat reduction:

Aim to maintain a healthy body weight

If you need to lose weight, aim to lose 5-10% of your current body weight and only try to lose a maximum of 1-4 kg per month.

Smoking:

Do not smoke. If you need assistance to quit call 131 848 or visit www.quitnow.info.au

Monitoring:

Self blood glucose monitoring in IFG/IGT is **NOT** necessary or recommended by Diabetes WA. Ask your GP for a fasting blood glucose test once a year instead.

Blood pressure should be monitored by your GP at every visit and high blood pressure should be treated

You should have your cholesterol tested every year by a blood test.

For more information contact Diabetes WA on 1300 136 588.