

One of the leading causes of chronic kidney disease is diabetes. Diabetes is a disease where the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use insulin properly. What does insulin do? Insulin controls blood sugar levels. If your body either doesn't make enough or blocks the correct use of insulin, this leads to high blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia). Diabetes impacts many parts of the body, which can create problems in multiple areas of your health.

Diabetes

There are two types of diabetes—Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 1 diabetes is where the body does not create insulin and typically begins when people are young. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease.

Type 2 diabetes is where the body makes insulin but cannot use it properly. This is called insulin resistance. Type 2 diabetes is the most common and is often associated with being overweight. Type 2 diabetes is typically found in adults (40 and older), but it can occur in younger people as well.

Some common symptoms of diabetes include urinating often, feeling very thirsty, feeling very hungry, extreme fatigue, blurry vision, slow healing of cuts/bruises, numbness in hands/feet, and weight loss (Type 1). Early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes decreases the risk of developing complications of diabetes. There are many similarities between Type 1 and 2 diabetes. Despite these similarities, Type 1 and 2 diabetes have different causes and different treatments.

Approximately 37.3 million Americans have diabetes. Type 2 is the most common cause – between 90%-95% of all cases.

Complications of diabetes

Diabetes can lead to complications throughout the body. These can be acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term). You can end up in the hospital if your blood sugar is too high. Diabetes is generally treated as an outpatient, but acute conditions such as very high blood sugar levels can lead to hospitalization.

Chronic complications include:

- Coronary artery disease (CAD)
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Nerve damage (neuropathy)
- Nephropathy (leads to kidney failure)
- Amputations
- Gastroparesis

It is important to follow the recommended treatment from your doctors to appropriately manage diabetes and decrease the risk for complication. Treatment includes monitoring blood sugar levels, oral medications, insulin injections, following a healthy diet, exercise, and maintaining a healthy weight.

Diabetes and kidney disease

Diabetes may harm the kidneys and lead to chronic kidney disease. How does this happen?

The following comes from the National Kidney Foundation (NKF). The filtering units of the kidney are filled with tiny blood vessels. Over time, high sugar levels in the blood can cause these vessels to become narrow and clogged. Without enough blood, the kidneys become damaged, and albumin (a type of protein) passes through these filters and ends up in the urine where it should not be.

Diabetes also impacts the urinary tract. It can cause damage to the nerves that normally let your brain know when your bladder is full and this can damage your kidneys. If urine remains in the bladder for a long time, this can lead to urinary tract infections. Bacteria grow rapidly in urine with high sugar levels. Sometimes these infections can spread to the kidneys

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section of our monthly newsletter will focus on support and resources offered both by the Organ Transplant Center and throughout the nation. Please utilize these as you need them and reach out with any questions.

Kidney and pancreas line: 319-356-1136

Heart line: 319-356-1028

Liver line: 319-356-1137

Lung line: 319-356-2016

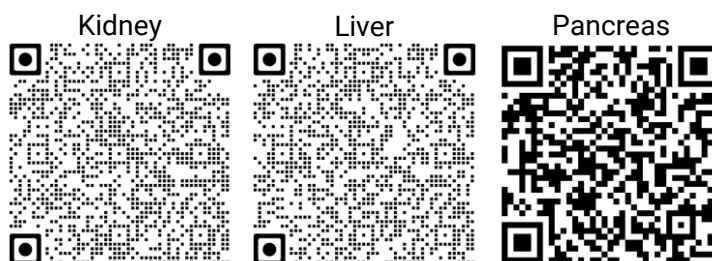
Medicare and Transplant

Medicare eligibility is based on age, disability, having end-stage kidney failure, or receiving a kidney transplant. No other organ transplant or need for organ transplant qualifies one for Medicare. There is a 1-year enrollment window for Medicare from date of kidney transplant. Delaying enrollment can increase chances of higher out-of-pocket expenses for anti-rejection medication. Medicare Advantage plans cover anti-rejection medications, and out-of-pocket expenses are subject to plan.

* For further questions or coverage changes, please contact the Organ Transplant Center Financial Counselors.

Video Resources

The Organ Transplant Center has put together videos to better explain the transplant evaluation process and provide additional patient education. Please scan the QR codes below to access these videos.



Organ Transplant Support Group

The Organ Transplant Center hosts a hybrid support group every other month—in-person and by Zoom. Each group is focused on a specific topic with speakers followed by time for discussion. If you have any questions, please contact 319-467-8385.

Location:

Iowa Donor Network
550 Madison Avenue
North Liberty, IA 52317

Date:

August 14, 2025

Speaker: UI Health Care
pharmacist

Zoom Information:

Meeting ID: 972 5761 0102
Passcode: 153533

Additional Resources

Social Security Disability

- [Adult Disability Starter Kit](#)
- [SSI Child Disability Starter Kit](#)

National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC): [How to Apply](#)

Iowa Anatomical Gift Fund: [Application](#)

Iowa Donor Network / Writing Your Donor Family:
<https://www.iowadonornetwork.org/transplant-recipients/writing-your-donor-family>

University of Iowa Telepsychology Training Clinic offers free, short-term counseling to lowans with limited access to mental health care.

- [Click here](#) to see if you qualify