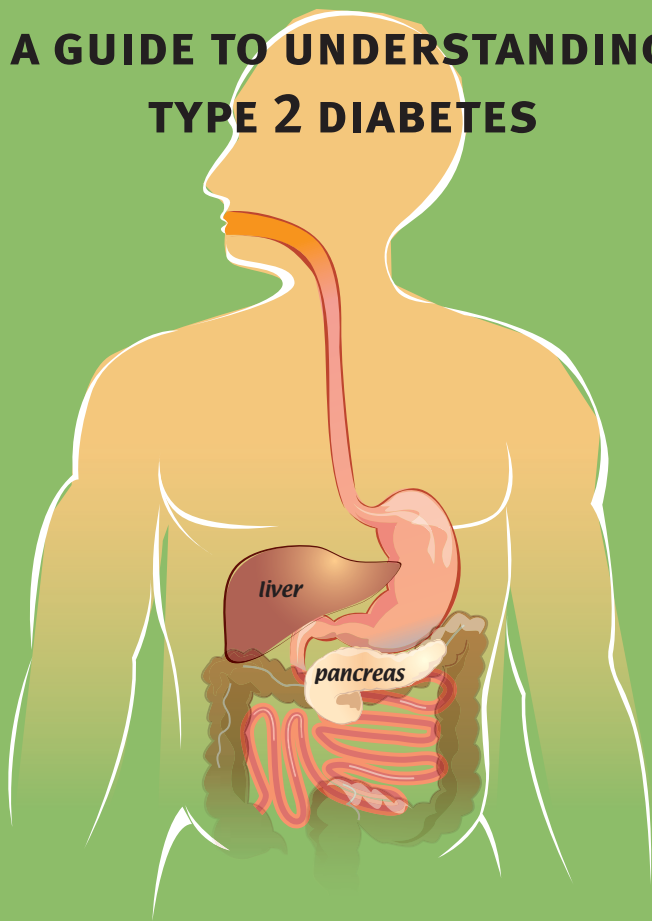


WHAT IS DIABETES?

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TYPE 2 DIABETES

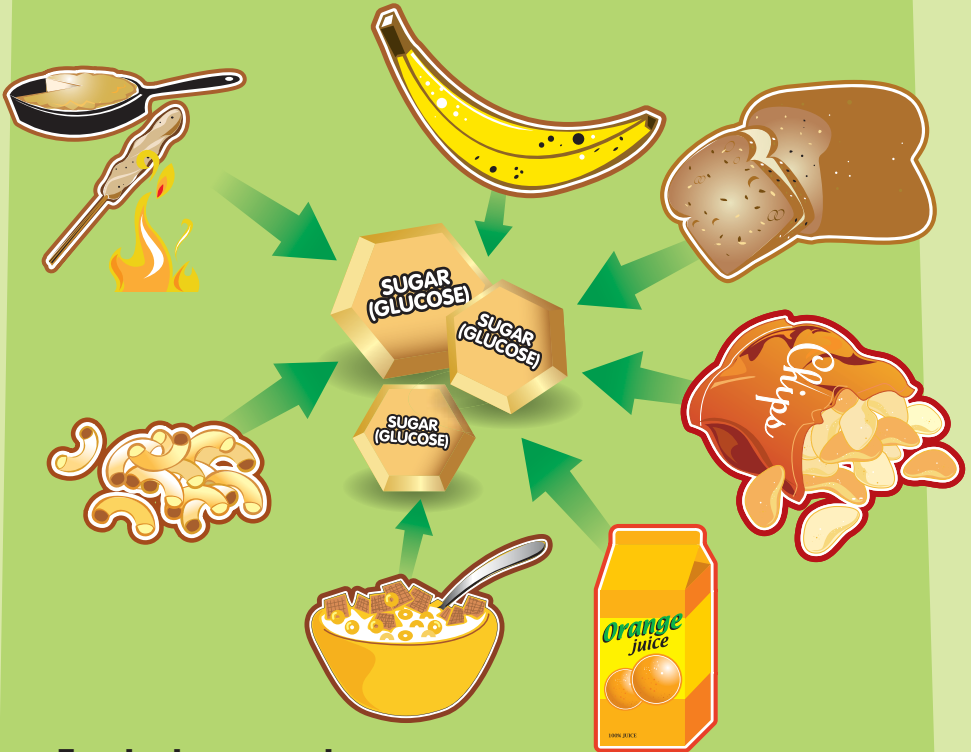


Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

HOW THE BODY WORKS

In this booklet, when we talk about blood sugar (glucose), we mean the kind of sugar found inside our body.

Blood sugar (glucose) comes from most of the food we eat.
Not just sweet tasting foods.



Foods that contain sugar are:

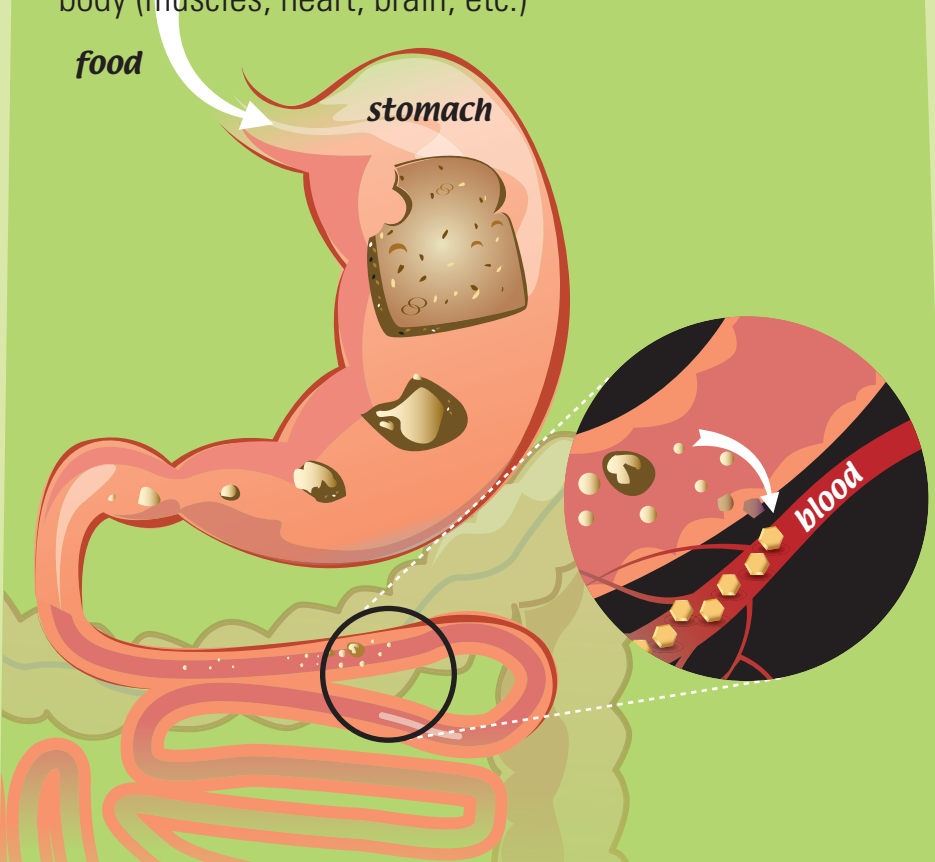
- Anything made of flour (bannock, bread, pasta,...), rice, potatoes, corn and cereals.
- Fruits and fruit juices.
- Desserts and sweets.

Meat, fish, and eggs do not contain sugar.

HOW THE BODY WORKS

Before you can understand diabetes (yellow pages, 6-10), you must first understand how the body works (green pages, 2-5).

When we eat, the sugar from the food goes into the blood. The blood carries the sugar to the different parts of the body (muscles, heart, brain, etc.)

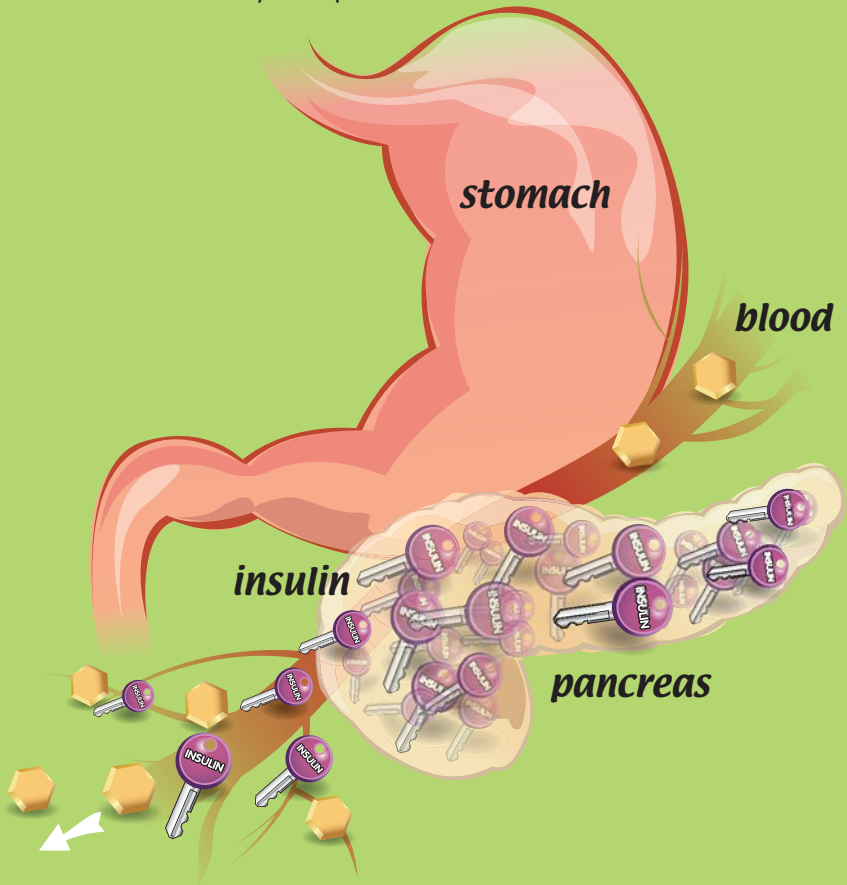


Blood sugar is the fuel that moves the different parts of the body and helps us work, hunt, cook, run, etc.

HOW THE BODY WORKS

To get the sugar out of the blood and into the different parts of the body we need a **key**. The key is called **insulin**.

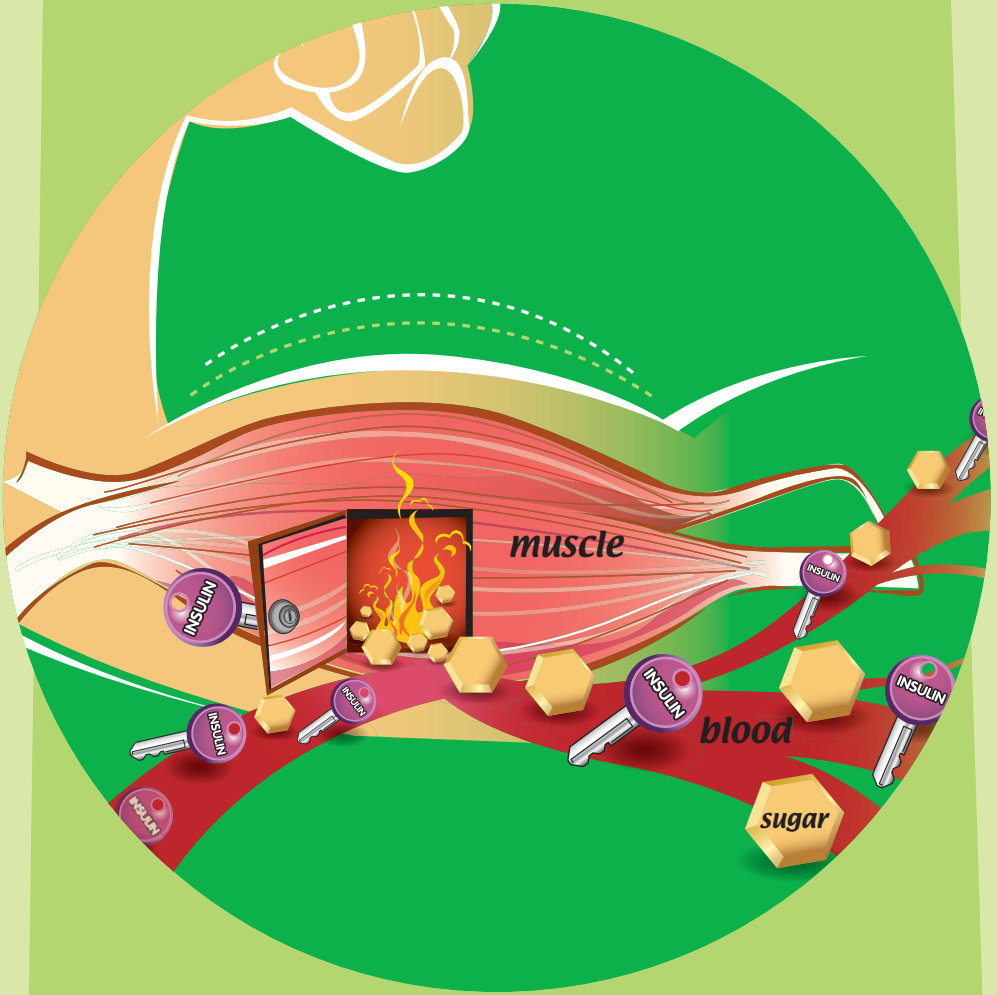
Insulin is made by the pancreas.



The pancreas makes insulin when we eat. By making the right amount of insulin for the food we eat, our pancreas keeps our blood sugar level healthy.

HOW THE BODY WORKS

Insulin is like a key that unlocks the door, and allows the sugar to enter the different parts of the body. Our body uses the sugar as fuel to keep us healthy.



This is why we all need some sugar in our blood.

HOW THE BODY WORKS

While we are sleeping, our liver releases sugar into the blood to keep a healthy blood sugar level. This allows us to sleep through the night without eating.



When there is enough sugar in the blood, the insulin will turn off the liver.

DIABETES IS WHEN WE HAVE TOO MUCH SUGAR IN THE BLOOD.

THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE:

1 The sugar cannot enter the different parts of the body because the insulin (keys) **cannot open the lock.**

AND/OR

2 The **liver releases too much sugar** into the blood.

AND/OR

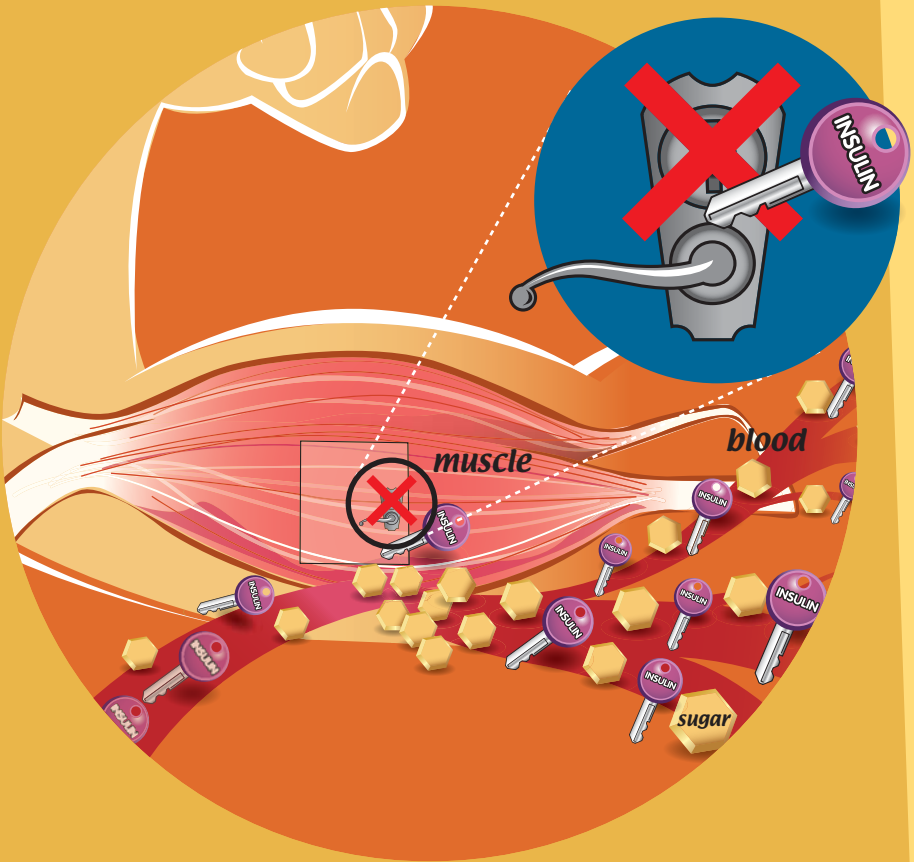
3 The sugar cannot enter the different parts of the body because the **pancreas does not make enough insulin (keys).**

In the next pages, we will explain these three reasons in more detail.

1 THE INSULIN CAN NOT OPEN THE LOCK

At the beginning of diabetes, the pancreas is still able to make insulin.

But, the insulin can't turn the lock and open the door to get the sugar out of the blood.



Because the sugar can't get into the different parts of the body, it builds up in the blood. This gives us **high blood sugar** - diabetes.

2 LEAKY LIVER

While we sleep, our liver releases sugar into the blood to keep a healthy blood sugar level.

When we have diabetes, the insulin cannot completely turn off the liver after it has released enough sugar.



The liver becomes like a leaky tap. It leaks sugar all night and causes high blood sugar in the morning when we wake up.

WHY INSULIN CAN'T OPEN THE LOCK OR TURN OFF THE LEAKY LIVER

1 Lack of activity

When we don't stay active and use our muscles enough, the insulin (key) has difficulty opening the lock.

2 Being overweight

When we gain too much weight, the extra fat blocks the lock.

3 Family history of diabetes

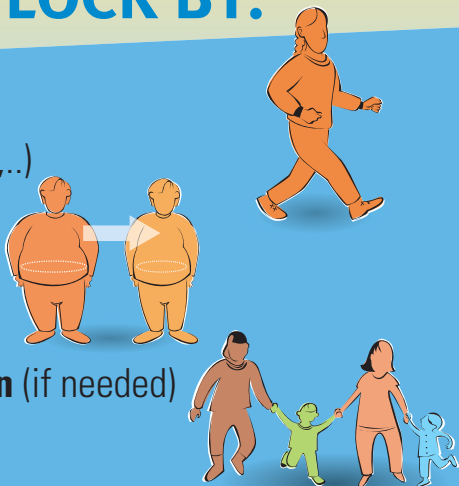
YOU CAN HELP YOUR INSULIN TURN THE LOCK BY:

1 **Being more active**
(walking, chopping wood,..)

2 **Losing a few pounds**

3 **Taking diabetes pills**

4 **Taking bed time insulin** (if needed)



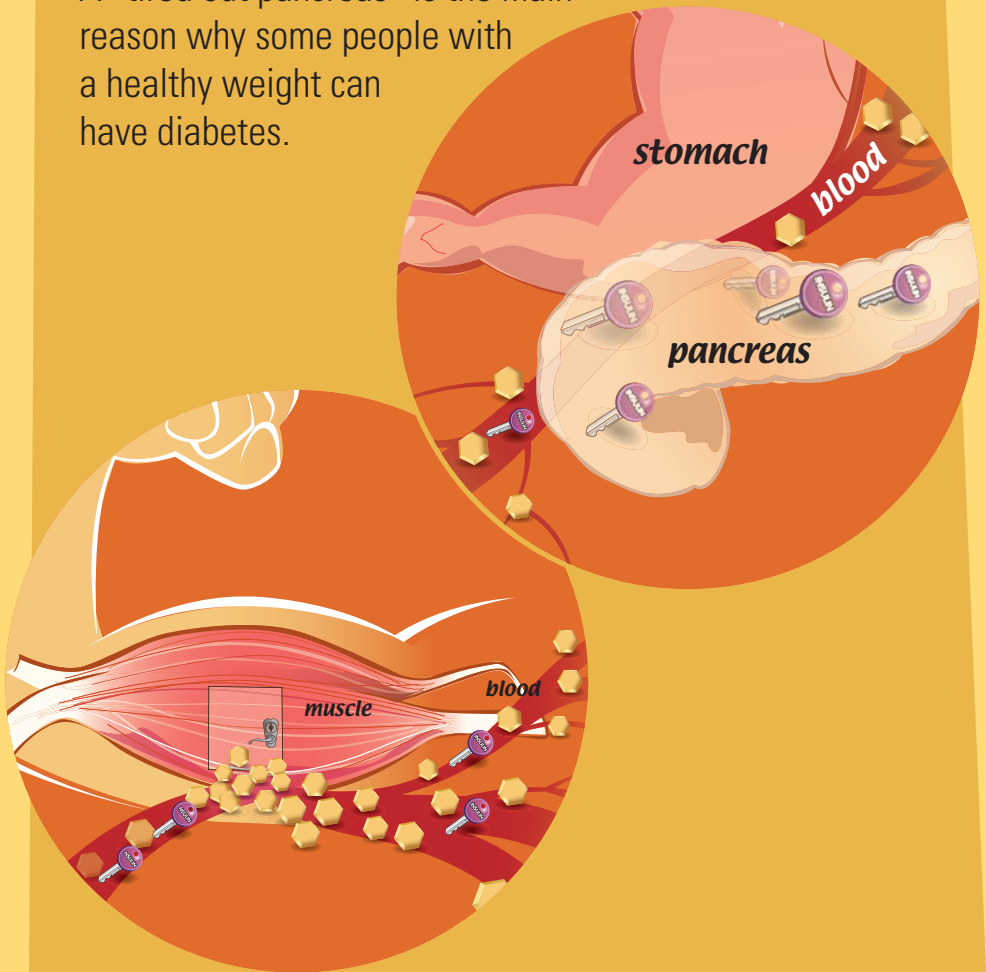
Adopting a healthy lifestyle for the whole family will help prevent diabetes for all family members.

3

THE PANCREAS DOES NOT MAKE ENOUGH INSULIN

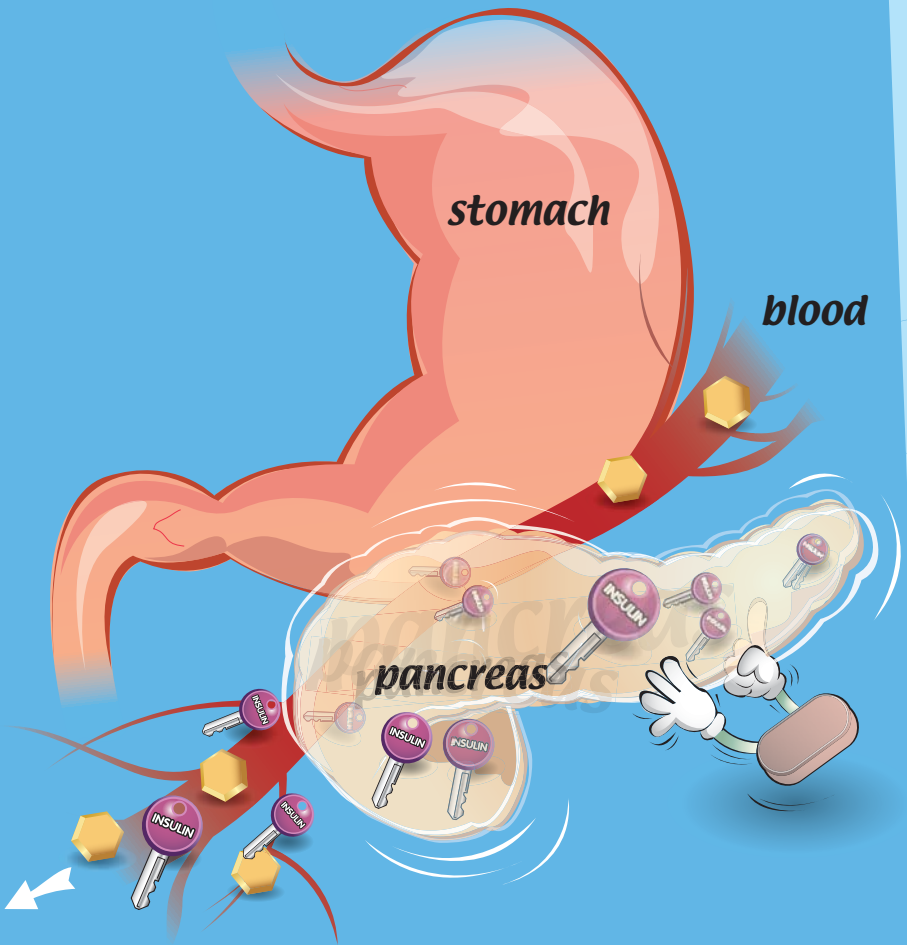
After we have diabetes for many years, our pancreas gets tired and can't make enough insulin.

A "tired out pancreas" is the main reason why some people with a healthy weight can have diabetes.



3

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR TIRED PANCREAS?



Some kinds of diabetes pills lower your blood sugar by pushing the pancreas to make more **insulin (keys)**.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE NEED INSULIN INJECTIONS?

When the pancreas is too tired, the pills that push the pancreas to make more insulin **do not work**. The pancreas cannot make enough insulin and your body needs insulin from injections.



Insulin cannot be made as a pill, so the only way to give our body insulin is by a needle. The insulin from the needle will go in the blood and will lower the blood sugar:

- taking insulin **at bed time** will help turn off the leaky liver and lower blood sugar in the morning
- taking insulin **with meals** will help lower blood sugar after the meals

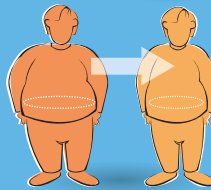
TO KEEP YOUR BLOOD SUGAR HEALTHY, YOU CAN...

1 Choose **healthy foods** and eat smaller portions.



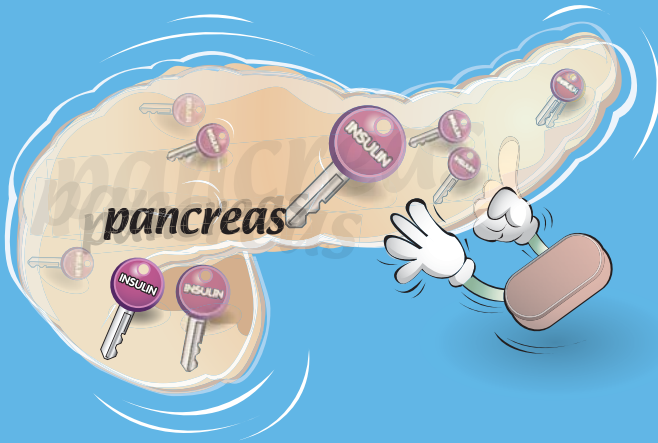
2 Help your insulin open the lock and turn off the leaky liver by:

- **being more active**
- **losing a few pounds**
- **taking certain diabetes pills**
- **taking bedtime insulin** (if needed)



TO KEEP YOUR BLOOD SUGAR HEALTHY, YOU CAN ALSO...

- 3** When needed, take other kinds of diabetes pills, to push your pancreas to make more insulin.



- 4** Take insulin injections when your body cannot make enough of its own insulin.



LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES



**TAKING CARE OF YOUR DIABETES
WILL HELP PREVENT DAMAGE
FROM HIGH BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS.**

STEPS TO HELP CONTROL MY BLOOD SUGAR ARE:

MY NEXT APPOINTMENT WITH MY HEALTH CARE TEAM IS:

Prepared by

Regional Diabetes Initiative

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Tel.: 418-923-3355 or 418-923-2564



Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James

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