

Diabetes Can Be a Driver for Hypertension: The Connection Explained Here



Controlling hypertension is the key to reducing cardiovascular risk in patients with diabetes. Below are tips to control these two conditions effectively.

Hypertension or increased blood pressure may occur in diabetics because of the impact of diabetes on the walls of the arteries and the fluid balance. Hypertension may, however, co-exist as an independent risk factor along with diabetes mellitus. In either case, it can significantly increase the chances of developing heart conditions or conditions like stroke as well as the risk of developing other complications like renal or eye related conditions like nephropathy, retinopathy, etc.

Consensus guidelines from the Joint National Committee on the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) recommend a blood pressure goal of less than 130/80 mm Hg in patients with diabetes. Based on the recent survey report conducted by Indus Health Plus, it was found that 26 per cent of the people tested had **high blood pressure** out of which 13 per cent had systolic blood pressure above 140 mm Hg. The sample size of the report was 21,000. Controlling hypertension is the key to reducing cardiovascular risk in patients with diabetes. It is an integral component of a comprehensive care plan that should include optimal management of diabetes and hyperlipidaemia, aspirin therapy, and lifestyle modifications.

How can diabetes cause hypertension?

In diabetes, the body does not produce enough insulin so it does not work effectively, or they cannot process glucose. Insulin is a hormone that aids the body in converting glucose from food into energy. When a person has insulin issues, glucose cannot enter their cells to provide energy, so it accumulates in the bloodstream instead. In addition to causing widespread damage to tissues and organs, high blood glucose can also interfere with the control of blood pressure. Damage to the blood vessels and kidneys can increase blood pressure, for instance.

How to prevent or control both diabetes and hypertension effectively?

Lifestyle modifications include following appropriate diet, engaging in 30 to 45 minutes of moderate-intensity activity most days of the week, avoiding **smoking** and alcohol. Appropriate medical treatment needs to be followed with good compliance for controlling the two conditions effectively. Here are some preventive measures that people can take to control these conditions in an effective manner.

- Regular preventive healthcare check-ups or screening to monitor the levels
- People with excess weight can reduce their high blood pressure and diabetes risks by losing just a little weight.
- Regular physical activity lowers blood pressure and helps manage blood glucose levels, among other health benefits.
- Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is often recommended by doctor to lower blood pressure and improve overall health. This typically includes:
 - Consuming plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
 - No added salt or sugar
 - Limit or avoid unhealthy fats, such as trans fats and animal fats
 - Try to avoid or stop smoking
- Newer ways from prevention like genetic testing can help in knowing the genetic risk or predisposition of these conditions in an individual and hence, accordingly people can take precautionary measures and make lifestyle modifications.

Diabetes and **hypertension** often occur together and have multiple risk factors and causes in common. The risk of developing one condition increases when a person has another. The early detection and treatment of hypertension and diabetes can prevent serious complications. A healthy lifestyle can help manage blood pressure and blood glucose levels.

The article is contributed by Amol Naikawadi, Joint Managing Director and Preventive Healthcare Specialist, Indus Health Plus.