# What Is Diabetes?

The term ‘diabetes mellitus’ is used to describe a group of conditions characterized by raised blood glucose levels (hyperglycemia) resulting from an absolute or relative deficiency of insulin. In insulin-dependent diabetes, now known as type 1, there is destruction of the pancreatic islet beta cells usually resulting from an autoimmune process and insulin treatment is essential to maintain life. In non-insulin-dependent diabetes, type 2, a key abnormality is resistance to the action of insulin and in the early stages of the disease insulin levels may actually be raised. In some patients with type 2, the insulin producing beta cells of the islets in the pancreas may show a degree of failure at some stage during the course of the disease process. Patients with type 2 are usually treated with ‘lifestyle modification’ therapy, with or without oral blood glucose lowering agents.

In both the major types of diabetes, a range of metabolic disturbances occurs together with the raised prevalence of hypertension amongst people with diabetes. The complications result chiefly from the effects of diabetes on the arterial and nervous systems

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1. **NUTRITION AND DIABETES**