

Acute complications of type 2 diabetes

Some complications of type 2 diabetes can start very suddenly, cause serious illness, are life-threatening and can lead to death if not detected early and managed very well by a trained doctor.

1. **Diabetes Keto-Acidosis (DKA):** Without insulin or adequate response to insulin, the body is unable to use the glucose from food we eat to produce energy, the body looks for other sources of energy.

Hence, the body starts to breakdown other sources of energy like fats, proteins etc. This causes the by-products of these fats and proteins to accumulate in the blood in form of acids. These are called ketones. They can accumulate in the blood and reach dangerous levels. This is called diabetes keto-acidosis. It has the following symptoms;

- The breath smells like fruits
- Nausea
- vomiting
- abdominal pain (tummy ache)
- Urinating frequently
- Too much thirst
- Weakness and tiredness
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deep and heavy breathing

DKA is hardly a complication of type 2 diabetes but can happen in rare occasions when insulin levels is really low.

The only way to detect diabetes keto-acidosis is to check for ketones in urine or blood.

2. **Hyperglycemic / Hyperosmolar States (HHS):** increase in the levels of blood sugar, leads to frequent passing of urine and dehydration. If blood sugar levels continues to rise without control, this also increases the level of dehydration to a point the body is unable to cope anymore. This happens at blood sugar levels as high as 600mg/dl or 33 mmol/l. This condition is rare but life-threatening. However, there are no ketones in the blood because the body is producing insulin. Symptoms of HHS are increased urination, too much thirst, tiredness/weakness, seizure or coma or confusion.