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Don't dawdle on diabetes: Go and get checked!

**National Diabetes Week 2026
12-18 July**

#DiabetesOutLoud #NDW2026

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is urging rural and remote Australians over 40 to book an appointment with their General Practitioner to check for Type 2 diabetes, saying the condition can often be treated effectively if diagnosed early.

"Type 2 diabetes can have very serious health outcomes if it's not diagnosed or managed early" **RDAA President, Professor Sarah Chalmers, said.**

"It is often called a silent killer because it can develop slowly and without noticeable symptoms – by the time you notice something isn't right, complications like nerve damage, kidney disease or cardiovascular issues may already have set in.

"Because of this, it is a leading cause of stroke, heart and kidney disease, dementia, preventable blindness, and limb amputations.

"An estimated 500,000 Australians are unaware they have Type 2 diabetes, putting them at risk from the serious health impacts associated with the disease.

"But the good news is that if you get checked early enough, it can often be well managed, reversed...or (ideally) even avoided in the first place. Three in every five cases of Type 2 diabetes are preventable through lifestyle changes like eating healthier foods, exercising more, losing weight and quitting smoking.

"The first step is to have your GP assess your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes based on lifestyle factors, your family history of diabetes, and getting a blood test to check your blood glucose levels. The blood test is quick and simple.

"Ideally, we like to check your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes every 3 years once you are 40 years old, and annually if you are at higher risk of developing the disease. Blood tests to screen for diabetes are recommended once a year for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years and older.



“We urge all rural and remote Australians, particularly those over 40, to book an appointment with their GP or health service to check their diabetes risk.”

Professor Chalmers emphasised that Australians should also remain vigilant for the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes, which can be fatal if not treated early.

“If you, your child or someone else you know experiences the sudden onset of symptoms like an unquenchable thirst, a feeling of being inexplicably tired, the need to urinate more frequently than usual, or overnight bedwetting, don’t delay in seeing your doctor or getting to hospital – these are the classic symptoms of Type 1 diabetes and urgent medical treatment is required” **she said.**

“Type 1 diabetes is very different to Type 2 diabetes – Type 1 is an auto-immune disease, it is not diet-related, and there is currently no cure for it, so a person with Type 1 must go onto a daily regimen of insulin (delivered via multiple daily injections or through an insulin pump) to stay alive. Unlike Type 2, no lifestyle modification can cure Type 1 or keep it under control.

“Type 2 diabetes affects about 1 in 24 Australians, while around 1 in 167 Australians has Type 1.

“While Type 1 (or Juvenile Diabetes) is mostly diagnosed in younger people, adults can also be diagnosed with it – so it is important to take heed of the warning signs and to act fast in seeking medical help.”

Assessing your diabetes risk:

Those who have a relative with Type 1 diabetes can access the national [Type1Screen program](#) for an antibody test to determine their risk of developing Type 1, while the [AUSDRISK](#) test is a fast and convenient way to help anyone assess their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Remember that your GP can undertake a full and thorough in-person assessment of your diabetes risk based on your health history and a full health check.

Diabetes information and resources:

- [Healthy Male – Diabetes page](#)
- [Diabetes Australia – About Diabetes](#)
- [Diabetes – Australian Facts \(AIHW\)](#)

Downloadable photo – [Professor Sarah Chalmers](#)

Available for interview:

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