

WHAT IS DIABETES?

The simple answer is that it is a disease where the body cannot regulate the amount of sugar in the blood. This answer is too simple. There are different types of diabetes that affect the body in different ways. They are all very serious and they all are very damaging. Without getting into a long discussion about Type 1 or Type 2, gestational or juvenile diabetes, we would like to explain a few differences. Some people can control their blood sugar levels simply by watching what they eat. They can check their blood sugar levels everyday and maintain a diet which keeps the sugar down to a safer level. Using this technique some people seem to have cured their diabetes. Don't be fooled. If they ever stop watching what they eat their blood sugar levels will return to dangerous levels. You can't cure diabetes this way, you can only control it. The body needs something called insulin to manage the sugar in the blood. Some people are diabetic because they don't manufacture enough insulin for their body to keep up with what they eat. If the body is just a little short, they can adjust their diet. If their body is significantly short of insulin, they must supplement with doctor prescribed insulin. These patients must also watch what they eat, but eating changes alone won't get their blood sugar levels to a normal number.

You can cure diabetes, through a pancreas transplant. The pancreas is the organ in the body which makes the insulin. If a body doesn't make enough or doesn't make any insulin, it's because the pancreas isn't working. Replacing the pancreas would solve the problem. Another type of diabetic patient is the insulin resistant diabetic. This describes Stephen Smith. These patients make enough insulin, but their body does not recognize that it has any. For some reason the receptor which the insulin attaches to, don't receive it and don't utilize it to control the blood sugar. In these cases, a pancreas transplant would do no good.

Diabetes affects every system and organ in the body. If you ever made a meringue pie you know that sugar actually “cooks” the egg whites. Your body is made up of exactly the same things as are in egg whites. When your blood sugar is high for too long a period it actually damages all your organ systems.