

Maturity-Onset Diabetes of the Young: What You Need to Know

What is it?

Maturity-onset diabetes of the young, or MODY for short, is an uncommon type of diabetes that people get as children or young adults. It runs in families.

What are the symptoms?

You may not have any symptoms in the beginning. Your doctor may notice higher than normal blood sugar levels on routine blood tests. As blood sugar levels get higher, you may:

- Feel very thirsty
- Pee more than normal
- Lose weight
- Have trouble seeing
- Get yeast infections that keep coming back

How is it diagnosed?

MODY is diagnosed by a special blood test that detects a gene mutation. The testing can be hard to get and is not always covered by insurance.

Consider asking your doctor about testing for MODY if you are told you have diabetes diagnosed before 30 years of age and all of the following:

- You are not obese
- Your blood testing does not show signs of type 1 diabetes (such as certain antibodies)
- You have several family members who had diabetes at a young age and were not obese

How is it treated?

Sometimes the only treatment is staying active and eating a diet low in carbs. If medication is needed, a small dose of sulfonylurea (a pill that treats diabetes) is good enough to keep blood sugar levels down. Rarely, patients with MODY need to use insulin.

What can I expect?

Some patients with MODY have the same problems as patients with type 1 or 2 diabetes, such as:

- Heart attacks
- Strokes
- Eye problems
- Kidney problems
- Foot problems, like nerve pain and ulcers

But other patients with MODY do not have these problems. It depends on the type of MODY and how well blood sugar levels are controlled over time.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes/monogenic-neonatal-mellitus-mody>

National Library of Medicine's Medline Plus
<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/maturity-onset-diabetes-of-the-young/>

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