



## FACT SHEET

### Module: Diabetes mellitus

- Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease that is characterized by excessively increased blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia)
- Diabetes may have the following causes: The pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or: the body cannot use insulin effectively
- What is Insulin?
  - Insulin is a hormone made in your pancreas
  - It works like a key to unlock cells so that blood sugar can enter
  - Glucose is then used by the body as fuel / energy of the cells
  - Consecutively, insulin lowers the glucose level in the blood
- Signs and symptoms of Diabetes are: Excessive thirst and urination, sudden weight gain or loss, hunger, vision changes, fatigue, exhaustion, susceptibility to infections
- There are the following types of Diabetes: Type 1 with early onset in adolescents, Type 2 in mainly adults, gestational diabetes (during pregnancy)
- The goal of treatment is to prevent short- and long-term complications of diabetes.
- Short-term complications of diabetes are: Hypoglycemia (blood sugar too low), Hyperglycemia (blood sugar too high), diabetic coma
- Symptoms of hypoglycemia are: tachycardia, restlessness, tremor, nausea, difficulty to concentrate, impaired vision and speech, mood changes, somnolence
- Symptoms of hyperglycemia are: frequent urination, thirst, tiredness, weakness, impaired vision, nausea, stomach and/or intestinal symptoms, coma
- Long-term complications of diabetes are: myocardial infarction, stroke, hypertension, peripheral artery disease, diabetic foot, retinopathy (vision loss), renal damage, polyneuropathy
- What blood sugar levels are normal? The blood sugar (glucose) level after an overnight fasting period is usually between 70 and 110 mg/dl in healthy people. A level of more than 125mg/dl under fasting conditions is too high and indicates that the patient has diabetes.
- What should a patient with diabetes do for his health? Check the blood sugar level regularly. If not well controlled → consult a doctor (the doctor may prescribe some medication). Maintain a healthy weight, stop smoking, exercise, eat a healthy diet, check the feet every day, brush the teeth every day. Regular examination by an ophthalmologist.