

LATENT AUTOIMMUNE DIABETES IN ADULTS (LADA)

WHAT IS LADA?

LADA is also called Type 1.5 diabetes. It's a slow progression of the Type 1 diabetes autoimmune attack. The body produces antibodies causing it to attack and destroy insulin producing cells, leading to hyperglycemia (high blood glucose). Unlike Type 1 diabetes, the destruction progresses slowly over months to years.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of LADA are similar to both Type 1 & Type 2 diabetes and related to those of hyperglycemia. This includes increased urination during the day as well as overnight, blurry vision, increased thirst and/or hunger, fatigue, etc.

DIAGNOSIS

LADA usually occurs after age 30. It's often misdiagnosed as Type 2 diabetes because the pancreas still produces some insulin. In many cases people with LADA are physically active with lean bodies. They may experience weight loss without trying. LADA may not be suspected until seeing a diabetes specialist when current treatment no longer works to control blood glucose levels. Blood tests to diagnose it include checking C-peptide levels, which provides information about how much insulin the body is making. Another blood test checks for antibodies against insulin producing pancreatic cells.

TREATMENT

At first, LADA may be treated with oral medication (pills). Once the autoimmune attack destroys the insulin producing cells, multiple daily insulin injections become necessary. Usually a combination of a long-acting insulin (taken once per day) plus a rapid-acting insulin (before meals) is needed.

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