

Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults (LADA) – Are You At Risk?

About LADA

LADA stands for latent autoimmune diabetes in adults. It is a slow-progressing form of type 1 diabetes, sometimes called type 1.5, that is diagnosed in adulthood. Like 'regular' type 1 diabetes, the autoimmune process of LADA destroys cells in the pancreas, requiring eventual insulin treatment. LADA is different and distinct from type 2 diabetes, yet people with LADA are often misdiagnosed because both occur in adulthood and share similar symptoms. Over time, this misdiagnosis can result in out-of-control blood sugars, which can lead to serious and life-threatening diabetic complications.

LADA Screening Checklist

See if you fit the typical LADA patient profile.

QUESTIONS

(1) Are you over 30 years old?

YES NO

(2) Is your family medical history clear of type 2 diabetes?

YES NO

(3) In the past six months, have you experienced sudden unexplained weight loss, frequent urination, or excessive thirst?

YES NO

(4) Are you at or near your ideal weight for your height (i.e., not overweight or obese)?

YES NO

(5) Do you or any of your relatives have another autoimmune condition (i.e., celiac disease, thyroid problems, rheumatoid arthritis)?

YES NO

YOUR SCORE

If you answered YES to two or more of these questions, you may be at risk for LADA. Take this checklist to your doctor and talk to him about whether or not you should be tested for latent autoimmune diabetes in adults.

Tests for LADA

There are two blood tests currently used to detect LADA:

(1) GAD Antibody Test

GAD (glutamic acid decarboxylase) is an enzyme that is produced when inflammatory cells start attacking the beta cells of the pancreas. In adults, GAD is a marker for a diagnosis of LADA.

(2) C-Peptide Test

C-peptide is an amino acid that is produced by the pancreas in amounts equal to insulin. A low level of c-peptide in the blood suggests that your pancreas is not making enough insulin, which can suggest LADA in a type 2 patient.



SOURCES:

A clinical screening tool identifies autoimmune diabetes in adults. Furlanos S, Perry C, Stein MS, Stankovich J, Harrison LC, Colman PG. Diabetes Care. 2006 May;29(5):970-5.