

the facts about

African Americans and Type 2 Diabetes

About Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes affecting Americans. With type 2 diabetes, either the body does not make enough insulin or the cells do not use it properly. Most foods you eat turn into sugar (glucose), which is the basic fuel for the cells in the body. Insulin takes glucose from the blood into the cells. A build up of glucose in the blood over time can lead to diabetes complications.



Risk Factors

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- Family history of diabetes (sibling or parent)
- Being 45 years of age or older
- Being overweight or obese
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Had diabetes while pregnant (gestational)
- High blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Being of an ethnic group such as African American or Hispanic/Latino
- Vascular problems affecting the heart, brain, or legs

Warning Signs

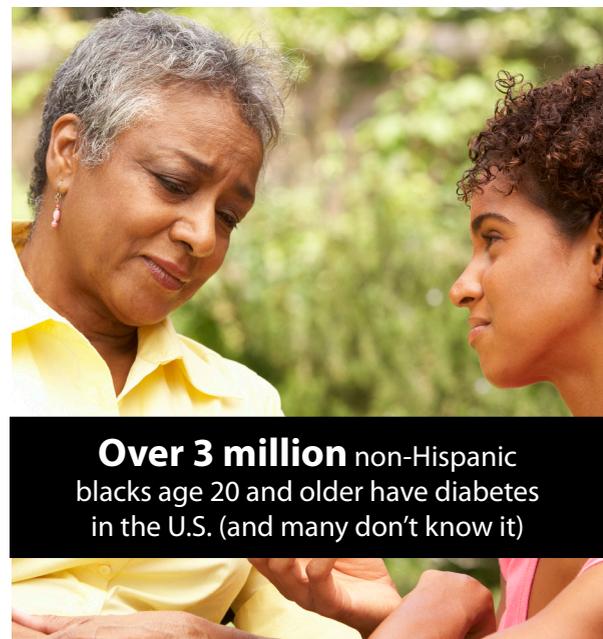
Signs of type 2 diabetes include:

- Feeling tired or fatigued
- Increased thirst or hunger
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or numbness of hands or feet
- Slow healing of wounds or sores
- Dry, itchy skin

Many people do not experience the signs associated with type 2 diabetes. If you have one or more of the above risk factors, talk to your doctor regardless of how you feel.

African Americans and Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes is a serious issue affecting many African Americans. According to the National Diabetes Education Program, over 3 million non-Hispanic blacks in the United States age 20 and older have diabetes (diagnosed and undiagnosed). In North Carolina, the prevalence rate for diabetes is higher for African Americans than any other racial or ethnic group. African Americans in the state also have higher death rates from diabetes when compared to whites. Continue reading to learn what you can do to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.



Over 3 million non-Hispanic blacks age 20 and older have diabetes in the U.S. (and many don't know it)

Information in this fact sheet was compiled from the following sources:

- American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org)
- National Diabetes Education Program (ndep.nih.gov)
- North Carolina Diabetes Prevention and Control Branch (www.ncdiabetes.org/)

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African Americans and Type 2 Diabetes (Continued)

What should I know about pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes, also called impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG), is a condition in which your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis. Having pre-diabetes puts you at a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes. If you have pre-diabetes, you are also at an increased risk for developing heart disease and stroke. Ask your doctor about regular pre-diabetes testing to measure glucose levels. Two tests are often used: a fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test or oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT).

Can type 2 diabetes be prevented?

The good news about type 2 diabetes is that a person can take steps towards preventing or delaying its onset. Read the next section to learn what you can do to help prevent pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes.

Steps to preventing or delaying type 2 diabetes:

- **Increase Physical Activity:** Being active everyday can help improve your overall health. Choose activities you enjoy. Walking, dancing, and gardening all count.
- **Choose Healthy Foods:** Choose more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Reduce fried foods and high calorie snacks.
- **Weight Loss:** Studies show that a weight loss of 5-7% of total body weight can help towards lowering risk. Work on losing weight if you are overweight.
- **Relax:** Is your life busy? Find ways to stay calm like deep breathing, walking, and reading a good book.



For more information

To learn more about type 2 diabetes prevention and management, visit the **Orange County Health Department** online at www.orangecountync.gov/health. You can also find free information through the following sources: **National Diabetes Education Program** (ndep.nih.gov/ or 1-888-693-NDEP); **American Diabetes Association** (www.diabetes.org or 1-800-DIABETES); and the **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse** (diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/ or 1-800-860-8747).