

# ***DIABETES: A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC***

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## **WHAT IS DIABETES?**

Diabetes is a chronic condition that impairs the body's ability to use food for energy. The hormone insulin, which is made in the pancreas, helps the body change food into energy. In people with diabetes, either the pancreas doesn't make insulin or the body can't use the insulin well. There are three main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes** is most often diagnosed in children and young adults and may account for 5-10% of all diagnosed cases. People with type 1 diabetes can't make insulin, so they must receive insulin several times a day to survive.
  - **Type 2 diabetes** accounts for 90-95% of diabetes cases and occurs when the body fails to properly use insulin. To manage their diabetes, people with type 2 may use intensive lifestyle changes, oral medications, or insulin. Until recently, type 2 was primarily seen in older Americans. That has changed as the number of younger adults and children with type 2 has risen in recent years.
  - **Gestational diabetes** affects approximately 2-5% of all pregnant women. It typically goes away after pregnancy, but many women who have gestational diabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes later. Additionally, there is some evidence that their children are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes as well.
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## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- Every 21 seconds, another individual is diagnosed with diabetes. Each day approximately 4,110 people are diagnosed with diabetes. About 1.5 million people will be diagnosed this year.
- In addition to those newly diagnosed, every 24 hours there are: 230 amputations in people with diabetes, 120 people who enter end-stage kidney disease programs, and 55 people who go blind.
- One in three Americans born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime if current trends continue. The odds are greater for minority children – one in two will develop diabetes in the same timeframe.
- The life expectancy of a person with diabetes is an average of 10-15 years less than someone without diabetes. According to the CDC, diabetes contributed to the deaths of over 224,000 people in 2005. **Nearly a quarter of a million Americans!**
- Since 1987, the death rate due to diabetes has increased by 45 percent while death rates from cancer and heart disease have declined.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease, adult-onset blindness, and lower limb amputations and a significant cause of heart disease and stroke.

### **National Office**

1701 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Tel: 703-549-1500

### **Diabetes Information**

call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)  
online [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

### **The Mission** of the American

Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

## WHAT IS THE DIABETES EPIDEMIC IN THIS COUNTRY?

- Currently, 20.8 million Americans, or 7 percent of the population. Between 1990 and 2001, diabetes prevalence in the United States increased by more than 60 percent.
- Another 54 million people have pre-diabetes, meaning their blood glucose levels are higher than normal and they are at higher risk of developing diabetes within 10 years of their initial diagnosis.
- One out of every 10 health care dollars is spent on diabetes and its complications. In 2007, approximately \$174 billion was spent on the direct (such as medical) and the indirect cost (such as lost productivity) of diabetes. While diabetes is currently one of the most costly health problems in America, many of these costs could be reduced by preventing diabetes in those at risk for it and increasing awareness of how to manage it in people who have the disease.

While we do not yet have a cure for diabetes, people with diabetes can live healthy, productive lives with the proper management and treatment. Prevention plays a key role – there are steps people with diabetes can take to prevent complications of diabetes, and also other ways to reduce the incidence of diabetes and/or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

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### **Making a Difference: *What Congress can do to stem the tide of diabetes***

In addition to joining the bipartisan House or Senate Diabetes Caucuses, the American Diabetes Association calls on Members of Congress to take action against diabetes by:

- **Supporting increased funding** for diabetes prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & research at the National Institutes of Health
- **Supporting reauthorization** of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians & Special Diabetes Funding for Type 1.
- **Supporting the American with Disabilities Act Restoration Act** in order to protect individuals with diabetes and other serious health conditions against discrimination and enable them to be judged just like everyone else – on their ability to do the job.
- **Supporting affordable, quality health coverage** - when it comes to diabetes, access to affordable and adequate health insurance saves lives and taxpayer dollars. Protect and expand coverage for diabetes services and supplies in private insurance and entitlement programs.
- **Supporting embryonic stem cell research** that offers significant new hope in finding a cure and new treatments for many serious diseases, including diabetes.
- **Supporting prevention issues** in order to strengthen healthy lifestyles and curb obesity and the onset of chronic diseases, such as diabetes.

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