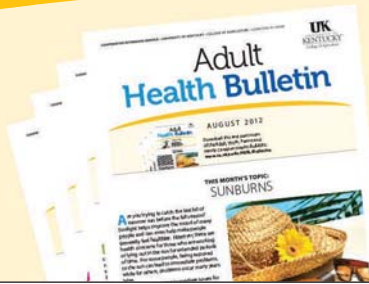


# Adult Health Bulletin



NOVEMBER 2014

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MYTHS ABOUT DIABETES

**A**s with any disease or health condition, there are many facts and many myths. Diabetes is growing in the United States and it has serious effects on the body when not taken care of properly. Below are some myths about diabetes. Knowing the facts about diabetes can help stop the spread of myth and misunderstanding.

### **Myth 1: Diabetes is not a serious disease.**

**Fact:** Diabetes is a serious disease. If a person who has diabetes is able to manage it well, then the many complications may be delayed or even prevented. People with diabetes may develop issues related to the skin and eyes, kidney damage and nerve damage.

### **Myth 2: Eating too many sweets and junk food causes diabetes.**

**Fact:** Type 1 diabetes is actually caused by genetics and other factors that are being studied.

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# Almost 30 million adults and children in the United States have diabetes.

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Type 2 diabetes has both a genetic part and is affected by lifestyle choices. There are choices about food and drinks that can affect the blood sugar. For instance, sugar sweetened beverages such as regular sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea and others can raise blood sugar levels and add lots of extra calories. Any high calorie diet can lead to weight gain and foods that have lots of calories, but few nutrients, can add to weight gain. Being overweight can increase your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

### Myth 3: If I have diabetes, I cannot eat sweets or chocolate.

**Fact:** As with any person, sweets should be eaten in moderation and as part of a balanced diet. A person with diabetes may have to be more mindful how much they eat, when they eat and whether it is in combination with being active. A person with diabetes does not have to avoid sweets or chocolate. It is important however, to be careful regarding how much and when sweets are eaten.

*It is estimated that 86 million people are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.*

### Myth 4: Diabetics are more likely to get illnesses like colds.

**Fact:** Having diabetes does not mean one is more likely to catch a cold or the flu. It is recommended however that people with diabetes get a yearly flu shot. This is because being sick can make controlling diabetes even more difficult. Everyone should make sure they wash their hands on a regular basis to help prevent the spread of sicknesses.

### Myth 5: Diabetes requiring the use of insulin means one has not been careful with diabetes care.

**Fact:** For many people who develop type 2 diabetes, the disease will change over time. When



first determined to have type 2 diabetes, a person may be able to control it with changes in diet and exercise. But over time, as the body makes less and less insulin, that same person may need to add insulin to their body. The insulin is used to make sure that the body has good blood sugar levels — an important thing to maintain.

As diabetes is becoming more common, it is important to know all of the facts. If you or someone you know is new to managing diabetes, talk to a healthcare provider. Professionals can help answer questions about diabetes.

#### SOURCES:

- American Diabetes Association. (2014) Diabetes Myths. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/myths/?loc=db-slabnav>
- American Diabetes Association. (2014). American Diabetes Month. <http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/american-diabetes-month.html>

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Health Bulletin

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