

## News Release For October 2009

### **THE FACTS ABOUT DIABETES: AMERICA'S SEVENTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH\***

#### **What is diabetes? \***

- Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take steps to manage the disease and lower the risk of complications.

#### **How many Americans have diabetes and pre-diabetes?\***

- 23.6 million Americans have diabetes — 7.8 percent of the U.S. population. Of these, 5.7 million do not know they have the disease.
- Each year, about 1.6 million people ages 20 or older are diagnosed with diabetes.
- The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has risen from 1.5 million in 1958 to 17.9 million in 2007, an increase of epidemic proportions.
- It is estimated that 57 million adults aged 20 and older have pre-diabetes. Pre-diabetes is a condition where blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Studies have shown that by losing weight and increasing physical activity people can prevent or delay pre-diabetes from progressing to diabetes.

#### **What is the prevalence of diabetes by type?**

- Type 1 (previously called insulin-dependent or juvenile-onset) diabetes accounts for 5 to 10 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.
- Type 2 (previously called non-insulin-dependent or adult-onset) diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is increasingly being diagnosed in children and adolescents

#### **What is the prevalence of diabetes by race/ethnicity?\***

##### *Non-Hispanic Whites*

- 14.9 million; 9.8 percent of all non-Hispanic whites aged 20 and older have diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes

##### *African Americans*

- 3.7 million; 14.7 percent of all non-Hispanic blacks aged 20 and older have diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes.
- Non-Hispanic blacks are about 1.8 times more likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites aged 20 and older.

##### *Hispanics/Latinos*

- 10.4 percent of Hispanics/Latinos ages 20 or older have diagnosed diabetes.
- Among Hispanics/Latinos, diabetes prevalence rates are 8.2 percent for Cubans, 11.9 percent for Mexican Americans, and 12.6 percent for Puerto Ricans.

##### *American Indians and Alaska Natives*

- About 16.5 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives aged 20 years and older who are served by the Indian Health Service have diagnosed diabetes.

- Diabetes rates vary -- among Alaska Native adults (6.0%) to American Indians in southern Arizona (29.3%).

#### *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*

- The rate of diagnosed diabetes in Asian Americans is 7.5 percent. However, prevalence data for diabetes among Pacific Islanders is limited.

#### **How many deaths are linked to diabetes? \***

- Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death listed on U.S. death certificates.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among people with diabetes — about 68 percent die of heart disease or stroke.
- The overall risk for death among people with diabetes is about double that of people without diabetes.

#### **Treating Diabetes\***

- Diabetes can lead to serious complications, such as blindness, kidney damage, cardiovascular disease, and lower-limb amputations, but people with diabetes can lower the occurrence of these and other diabetes complications by controlling blood glucose, blood pressure, and blood lipids.
- Many people with type 2 diabetes can manage their blood glucose by following a healthy meal plan and exercise program, losing excess weight, and taking oral medication. Some people with type 2 diabetes may also need insulin to manage their blood glucose.

#### **UKPDS/UKPDS Follow-Up Study\*\***

- The United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS) was a groundbreaking study in people with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes that ended in 1997. This study established that blood glucose control could reduce the risk of microvascular complications (eye disease, kidney disease, and the neuropathy that can lead to limb amputation) in type 2 diabetes. Unlike patients with diabetes of longer duration, in these patients, there was no increase in CVD related deaths during the early treatment period.
- Ten years later, the UKPDS Follow-Up Study found participants in the intervention group who achieved blood glucose control as close to normal as possible during the original UKPDS had a lower risk of heart attack than those in the control group who had less well-controlled blood glucose. The intervention group also showed continued risk reduction in microvascular disease.
  - This “legacy effect” indicates that the benefits of blood glucose control that is as close to normal as possible in the early years after diagnosis can lead to a lasting impact on health risks over a long period of time.
  - Furthermore, a 27% reduction in the risk of heart attacks was seen in those who were overweight and managed their diabetes with blood glucose goals as close to normal as possible when using the common drug, metformin.
- This “legacy effect” underscores the importance of early detection of diabetes. If diabetes is diagnosed, working toward early blood glucose control as close to normal as possible can result in long term benefits.

#### **How much does diabetes cost the nation?\***

- Total health care and related costs for the treatment of diabetes run about \$174 billion annually.
- Of this total, direct medical costs (e.g., hospitalizations, medical care, treatment supplies) account for about \$116 billion.
- The other \$58 billion covers indirect costs such as disability payments, time lost from work, and premature death.

#### **What is the National Diabetes Education Program?**

- Founded in 1997, the National Diabetes Education Program is a federally-sponsored initiative that involves public and private partners in efforts to improve the treatment and outcomes for people with diabetes, promote early diagnosis, and prevent or delay the onset of diabetes.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.
- NDEP's *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign seeks to reach the nearly 24 million Americans with diabetes, and their families, with messages about the seriousness of diabetes, ways to control the disease, and the benefits of controlling diabetes for life.

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\*The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. National Diabetes Statistics, 2007. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
\*\* 10-Year Follow-up of Intensive Glucose Control in Type 2 Diabetes N Engl J Med 2008; 359 N Eng J Med 10.1056/NEJMoa0806470

For more information, contact the Fayette County Health Department Diabetes Prevention and Control program at 283-1044 or visit their web site at [www.fayettehealthdept.org](http://www.fayettehealthdept.org)