

Diabetes and Black Americans



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic health disease that causes blood sugar levels to rise higher than normal in your body. One in 10 Americans (34.2 million people) have diabetes, with another 88 million having prediabetes.¹

What types of diabetes are there?

Type 1 means your body doesn't make enough insulin. Type 1 diabetes:

- Develops quickly
- Is often diagnosed in children and young people
- Has no known prevention

Prediabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal. Prediabetes:

- Comes with increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes
- Can be reversed with lifestyle changes

Type 2 means your body doesn't use insulin well. Type 2 diabetes:

- Develops slowly
- Is often diagnosed in adults
- Can be prevented or delayed with weight loss, healthy eating and an active lifestyle

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women. Gestational diabetes:

- Increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes

4 Types of Diabetes

- Type 1
- Prediabetes
- Type 2
- Gestational diabetes

How do you treat diabetes?

Day-to-day treatment and control of diabetes can include:

- **Medication** — intravenous or tablet, depending on severity and type
- **Diets** — lower fat and reduced carbs and increase healthy fats, carbs and fiber
- **Exercise** — moving more, losing weight

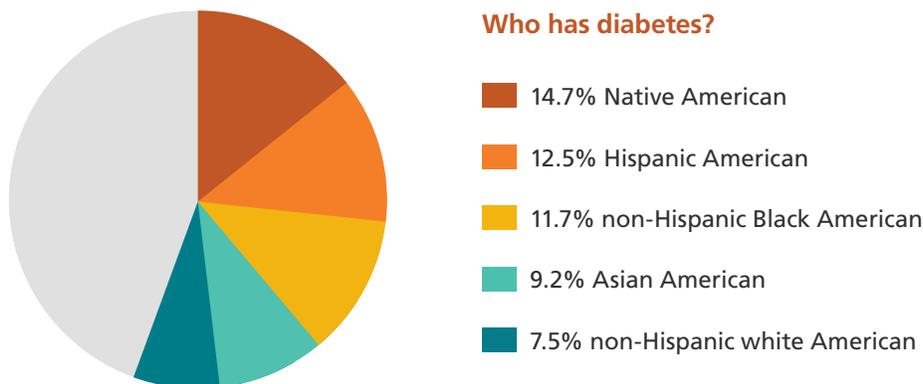
How does diabetes affect your health?

Diabetes has been linked to diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, obstructive sleep apnea, cancer, bone disorders and poor circulation. If left untreated, diabetes can cause blindness, nerve damage, skin problems, kidney disease and even amputation, related to poor circulation.

Communities of color are more at risk

Diabetes is extremely common in communities of color. Type 2 diabetes is one of the top health crises today.

Determining your risk of developing diabetes³



External factors besides clinical care and treatment, also called social determinants of health, can affect your health outcomes. For diabetes, some of these factors include:

- Access to healthy food
- Availability of affordable and safe housing
- Access to quality and affordable health care, including health insurance
- Economic and job opportunities
- Education
- Social support

Genetics and biology may also play an important role in diabetes prevalence and complication rates.⁴

Black Americans have a

77% higher risk

of being diagnosed with diabetes,

while **Hispanics and Latinos** have a

66% higher risk

of being diagnosed.²

The ripple effect ⁴

Black and Hispanic Americans are significantly more likely to live in poverty than white Americans.

Without access to basic necessities and a safe environment in which to live, they may struggle more to exercise or eat fresh foods regularly.

This, in turn, increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in Blacks and Hispanics.



Lowering your risk of developing diabetes

Proactively adopting healthy habits can help to lower your risk of developing diabetes. These habits include healthier diet and nutrition, improved exercise and managing sleep and stress.⁵

Diet and exercise can play a huge role in lowering your risk. Typically, those who develop Type 2 are overweight, sedentary, and have been for years. However, some people are predisposed to diabetes through genetics.

You cannot reverse diabetes, but you can reverse prediabetes. This is accomplished through a healthy diet and exercise.

Here to help you through your diabetes journey

The OptumRx[®] Diabetes Management Program serves people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. This program helps identify people at high risk. It also uncovers patterns in the general population and changes in a person's overall health. This approach allows us to tailor the type of outreach and intervention best suited to each person.

If you're lower risk, we offer educational tools and resources as part of your treatment plan. Then, we can help spot gaps in your care. We can close those gaps with reminders to refill medication, education on new medical developments, and paying attention to other risks, such as heart disease.

If you're high risk, you may need access to more personalized care. This could mean:

- One-on-one conversations with pharmacists and nurses who can tailor advice and insights to your needs
- Coaching on medication, lifestyle changes, diet and nutrition
- Counseling for more serious issues, such as out-of-range blood sugar levels



Our hope for healthier people

At Optum, we believe that health care should be equally available to everyone. We take special care to provide helpful resources and information for those who are disproportionately affected by negative health outcomes. And we strive to close gaps in care and in the ways people access medical services. Our vision is a world where diabetes is not as widespread. Where families are stronger, and equitable health care for everyone opens doors for a healthier future without bias.

Diabetes management from the palm of your hand

Apps like Fooducate, mySugr, and Beat Diabetes may make it easier to track and manage your diabetes on your own, conveniently from your mobile device.

Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Diabetes and prediabetes](#). Last reviewed Nov. 3, 2020. Accessed Jan. 6, 2022.
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3. Meissner M. [What to know about diabetes in people of color](#). *Medical News Today*. March 15, 2021. Accessed Jan. 6, 2022.
4. Kenney J, Garza M, Skoler E. [How race and ethnicity affect diabetes prevalence, management and complications](#). diaTribe. Jan. 19, 2021. Accessed Jan. 6, 2022.
5. Optum. [COVID-19 heightens urgency for diabetes](#).



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