

Diabetes: Facts to Dispel the Rumors

There are many common misconceptions about diabetes. To help set the record straight, take a look at the below diabetes facts.

1. Diabetes is a serious disease.

Diabetes causes more deaths per year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. Two out of three people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.

2. Being overweight does not necessarily mean you will develop diabetes.

It is true that being overweight is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, but most overweight people never develop it. Additionally, many people with type 2 diabetes are at a normal weight.

3. Eating too much sugar does not cause diabetes.

It is important to eat a healthy diet, but simply eating too much sugar is unlikely to cause diabetes. Diabetes actually begins when something disrupts the body's ability to turn food that is eaten into energy.

4. People with diabetes can still eat sweets.

If eaten in moderation as part of a healthy meal plan or combined with exercise, sweets can be eaten by diabetics. However diabetics must take their insulin prescription regularly as recommended to ensure that the sugar will be absorbed by the body and does not stay in the blood.

5. People with diabetes do not need to eat foods advertised as "diabetic foods".

A healthy meal plan for people with diabetes is generally the same as a healthy diet for anyone – low in fat, moderate in salt and sugar, with meals based on whole grains, vegetables and fruit. Diabetic and "dietetic" foods typically do not offer any special benefits. In fact, most of them still raise blood glucose levels, are generally expensive, and can have a laxative effect if they contain sugar alcohols.



6. Carbohydrates should still be eaten by diabetics.

Carbohydrates form the foundation of a healthy diet because they contain many essential nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, and fiber. However, because carbohydrates have the greatest effect on blood sugar levels, portion size is important and diabetics are asked to monitor how many carbohydrates they eat. A good rule of thumb is to choose carbohydrates containing the most nutrients, like whole-grain breads and high-fiber fruits and vegetables.

7. People with diabetes are not more likely to get colds or other illnesses.

Diabetics are no more likely to get a cold or another illness than non-diabetics. However, any illness can make diabetes more difficult to control and lead to health complications, so people with diabetes are encouraged to get flu and pneumonia vaccinations.

8. If a person previously diagnosed with type 2 diabetes is told by a doctor to start using insulin, it does not mean that person is failing to take care of his or her diabetes properly.

For most people, type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease. When first diagnosed, many people with type 2 diabetes can keep their blood glucose at a healthy level with oral medications. But over time, the body may gradually produce less insulin, and eventually oral medications may not be enough to keep blood glucose levels normal. Using insulin to get blood glucose levels to a healthy level is a good thing, not a bad one.

Because it is vitally important that diabetics practice good diabetes management, having a home caregiver to help with medication reminders, monitor blood glucose levels and provide early recognition of potential complications can make all the difference in someone's diabetic care.

Call **Continuum** today to schedule a home care aide who is well trained to assist a diabetic patient with maintaining good health.

Sources: American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Care Club, WebMD