

USVH Disease of the Week #6: Diabetes

A SNAPSHOT OF DIABETES: THE FACTS ABOUT AMERICA'S SIXTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH BY DISEASE

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches, and other food into energy.

How many Americans have diabetes?

- About 16 million Americans have diabetes; that's about 6 percent of the population. About 5.4 million of these people do not know they have the disease.¹
- Each year, 798,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes.¹
- The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has risen from 1.5 million in 1958 to 10.3 million in 1997, a sixfold increase.^{1,2}

What is the prevalence of diabetes by type?

- Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5 to 10 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.¹
- Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.¹

What is the prevalence of diabetes by gender?

- 7.5 million men have diabetes (8.2 percent of all men age 20 years and older).¹
- 8.1 million women have diabetes (8.2 percent of all women age 20 years and older).¹

What is the prevalence of diabetes by age?

- 6.3 million Americans age 65 or older have diabetes -- 18.4 percent of this age group.¹
- 15.6 million Americans age 20 or older have diabetes -- 8.2 percent of this age group.¹

What is the prevalence of diabetes by race/ethnicity?

African Americans

- 2.3 million African Americans age 20 or older have diabetes -- 10.8 percent of this group.¹
- African Americans are 1.7 times as likely to have diabetes as Caucasians of similar age.¹

Hispanic Americans

- On average, Hispanic Americans are almost twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age.¹

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

- Prevalence data for diabetes among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are limited. Some groups within this population are at increased risk for diabetes.¹
- Data collected from 1988 to 1995 suggest that Native Hawaiians are twice as likely to have diagnosed diabetes as Caucasian residents of Hawaii.¹

Native Americans

- Rates of diabetes vary widely among Native American tribes, bands, pueblos and villages, ranging anywhere from 5 to 50 percent.¹

Caucasians

- 11.3 million non-Hispanic whites age 20 or older have diabetes -- 7.8 percent of this group.¹

How does diabetes occur geographically?

- In Mississippi, 17 percent of adults ages 65 to 74 have diabetes – the highest prevalence in the United States for this age group. In addition, 8.5 percent of adults ages 45 to 64 in Mississippi have diabetes.³
- In Texas, 15.2 percent of adults ages 65 to 74 have diabetes – the second-highest prevalence in the United States for this age group. In addition, 9 percent of adults ages 45 to 64 in Texas have diabetes.³
- In Alaska, Delaware, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, approximately 14 percent of adults ages 65 to 74 have diabetes.³
- In 31 states and the District of Columbia, the prevalence of diabetes for adults ages 65 to 74 falls between 10 percent and 14 percent.³
- In Tennessee, 9.1 percent of adults ages 45 to 64 have diabetes – the highest prevalence in the United States for this age group.³
- In addition to Tennessee, Texas, and Mississippi, the following states have the highest prevalence of diabetes among adults ages 45 to 64: Louisiana (8.7 percent), Michigan (8.5 percent), Arkansas (8.2 percent), South Carolina (8.2 percent), and West Virginia (8 percent).³

How many deaths are linked to diabetes?

- Diabetes contributed to 187,800 deaths in 1995.¹
- Diabetes was the 7th leading cause of death listed on U.S. death certificates in 1995 (6th leading cause of death by disease).¹
- Studies have found death rates to be twice as high among middle-aged people with diabetes as among middle-aged people without diabetes.¹

How much does diabetes cost the nation?

- Total health care and related costs for the treatment of diabetes run about \$98.2 billion annually.⁴
- Of this total, direct medical costs (e.g., hospitalizations, medical care, treatment supplies) account for about \$44.1 billion.⁴
- The other \$54.1 billion covers indirect costs such as disability payments, time lost from work, and premature death.⁴

¹National Diabetes Fact Sheet: National estimates and general information on diabetes in the United States. National Institutes of Health, et al, 1997.

²*Diabetes in America* (2nd Edition). National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health; NIH Publication #95-1468, 1995.

³Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1993-1995.

⁴American Diabetes Association. "Economic Consequences of Diabetes Mellitus in the U.S. in 1997," *Diabetes Care* 1998; 21(2): 296-309.