

Myths & facts about Diabetes

There are many myths about diabetes which can make separating fact from fiction difficult. To cut through the confusion, we've broken down some of the common misconceptions:

Myth- Diabetes is not serious

Fact - There is no such thing as "mild" diabetes. All types of diabetes are serious and can lead to complications if not well managed. Diabetes can affect quality of life and can reduce life expectancy.

Myth- All types of diabetes are the same

Fact - There are a number of types of diabetes. The most common are type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. Other forms of diabetes are less common. Each type of diabetes has different causes and may be managed in different ways but once someone has any type of diabetes except gestational diabetes, it needs to be managed every day. Gestational diabetes goes away after pregnancy, however it does significantly increase someone's risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. All types of diabetes are complex and serious.

Myth - Diabetes can be prevented

Fact - Not **all** types of diabetes can be prevented. Type 1 is an autoimmune condition, it cannot be prevented and there is no cure. The cause of type 1 diabetes is still unknown.

Strong international evidence shows diabetes prevention programs can help prevent type 2 diabetes in up to 58 per cent of cases. There is no single cause of type 2 diabetes, but there are well-established risk factors. Your risk of developing diabetes is also affected by things you cannot change such as family history and ethnicity.

Myth - You have to be overweight or obese to develop diabetes

Fact - Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes but it is not a direct cause. Some people who are overweight may not develop type 2 diabetes while some people who are of a healthy weight will develop type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is not preventable and not associated with weight, physical inactivity or any other lifestyle factors.

Myth - You only get type 1 diabetes when you're young

Fact - The onset of type 1 diabetes occurs most frequently in people under 30 years, however new research suggests almost half of all people who develop the condition are diagnosed over the age of 30.

Myth - You only get type 2 diabetes when you're old

Fact - Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adults over the age of 45 years but is increasingly occurring in younger age groups including children, adolescents and young adults.

Myth - People with diabetes can't eat dessert

Fact - Because diabetes affects blood glucose levels, many people think they need to avoid sugars and foods containing sugar. However, if eaten as part of a healthy meal plan, or combined with exercise, sweets and desserts can be eaten by people with diabetes. The key is to eat everything in moderation.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines are recommended for people with all types of diabetes as well as the rest of the population. For your individual dietary needs, we recommend seeing an Accredited Practising Dietitian and talking to your diabetes healthcare team about the right approach to help you live well with your diabetes.

Myth - People with type 1 diabetes can't participate in sports or exercise

Fact - Many Australian sport champions have type 1 diabetes. Read our profile on AFL player [Jack Fitzpatrick](#) who plays for the Melbourne Football Club.

Myth - No one in my family has diabetes so I don't have to worry

Fact - Family history is only one of the risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Myth - People with diabetes are unsafe drivers

Fact - The vast majority of drivers who use insulin can drive safely. Learn more [here](#).

Myth - Only people with type 1 diabetes need insulin

Fact - Type 2 diabetes is a progressive condition. 50 percent of people with type 2 diabetes will need insulin after 6-10 years of being diagnosed with diabetes because the pancreas produces less insulin over time. Taking medication when required can result in fewer complications in the long-term and is part of managing type 2 diabetes.

People with type 1 diabetes depend on insulin replacements every day of their lives. They must test their blood glucose levels several times throughout the day.

From: <https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/myths-facts>