



Fight for your health. Set goals, make a plan and ask for help from health care professionals. Tell your friends and family how they can help, and seek the support of a diabetes support group.

# Three Things Every LGBT Older Adult Should Know About Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic illness that compromises the body's ability to produce and respond to the creation of insulin, the hormone that transforms glucose (sugar) into energy. For those with type 2 diabetes (the most common form of the disease), early detection and treatment are crucial to prevent many complications associated with the disease. Read these important points to learn more.

## 1. Three Main Forms

There are three types of diabetes: type 1, which affects children, type 2, the most common type, and gestational diabetes, which affects pregnant women. Type 2—which accounts for almost 95 percent of adult cases—causes blood glucose (sugar) levels to rise higher than normal. This is also called hyperglycemia. People of color and adults over 40 are at a higher risk for this disease.

## 2. LGBT People are at Greater Risk

Research shows that LGBT people are more likely to be overweight, smoke, drink alcohol and use drugs—all of which increase the chances of developing diabetes as well as intensify health complications at its onset.

## 3. Older People of Color are Disproportionately Impacted

Research shows that communities of color have a diabetes rate 2 to 6 times higher than their white counterparts. Older people of color are also more likely to experience severe diabetic complications which can include blindness and amputation.

*(over please)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

You'll find lots of resources online to keep your heart healthy. Visit [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org) for everything from information about early detection, to healthy, tasty meal ideas!



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# Reduce Your Risk and Take Charge of Your Health

- **Pay Attention to the Signs.** The symptoms of diabetes are often interpreted as normal symptoms of aging. These can include frequent thirst, urination, hunger and fatigue, as well as spotty vision, irritability and numbness in the hands or feet. Not sure? Get tested—just to be safe. Ask your doctor to test your blood glucose, blood pressure, body mass index and cholesterol to get the full picture.
- **Get Treated, Before it Gets Worse.** Without treatment diabetes can lead to severe health problems including premature death. Taking care of yourself means understanding your risk factors including your hereditary, lifestyle and behavioral factors.
- **Exercise and Weight Loss Can Help.** Fortunately, simple lifestyle changes can delay or prevent the onset of diabetes. Try a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Losing 7% of your body weight—or just 15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds—can lower your risk. Don't worry if you don't get to your ideal body weight! Keep at it by making small changes every day.
- **Choose Good Food.** Another simple change that can help: eat more fiber, fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, and avoid fried or fatty foods and excessive carbo-hydrates. Choose low-fat dairy and watch your portion size. Opt for water over soda, and plan ahead to keep healthy snacks on hand.
- **Drink and Smoke in Moderation, if at All.** Drinking and smoking can exacerbate diabetes. The American Heart Association recommends drinking no more than one drink per day—12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard alcohol. And if you're a smoker, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.
- **Stay Upbeat.** Diabetes shouldn't prevent you from enjoying a full and active life. Enlist your friends and family in helping you reach your goals for better health. Consider joining a support group or find more information online at [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org).

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