

Diabetes Statistics for Latinos

Diabetes is the fifth-deadliest disease in the United States, and it has no cure. The total annual economic cost of diabetes in 2002 was estimated to be \$132 billion, or one out of every 10 health care dollars spent in the United States.

Prevalence

- The prevalence of type 2 diabetes is 1.5 times higher in Latinos than non-Latino whites.
- Two million or 8.2% of all Latino Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes.
- Approximately 24% of Mexican Americans in the United States and 26% of Puerto Ricans between the ages of 45-74 have diabetes.
- Nearly 16% of Cuban Americans in the United States between the ages of 45-74 have diabetes.

Latinos and diabetes-related complications

- Diabetic retinopathy is a term used for all abnormalities of the small blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes, such as weakening of blood vessel walls or leakage from blood vessels. The prevalence of diabetic retinopathy in Mexican Americans is 32-40%.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of end stage renal disease (kidney failure), accounting for 43% of new cases. In 2000, there were 41,046 people with diabetes that initiated treatment for end stage renal disease (kidney failure), and 129,183 underwent dialysis or kidney transplantation. Among people with diabetes, Mexican Americans are 4.5 to 6.6 times more likely to suffer from end stage renal disease.

Prevention of complications of diabetes

- **Glucose control.** Improved blood glucose control benefits people with either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. For every 1 point reduction in A1C, the risk for developing microvascular complications (eye, kidney and nerve disease) decreases by up to 40%.
- **Blood pressure control.** Blood pressure control can reduce cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) by 33% to 50% and can reduce microvascular disease (eye, kidney and nerve disease) by approximately 33%.
- **Control of blood lipids.** Improved control of cholesterol and lipids (e.g. HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) can reduce cardiovascular complications by 20% to 50%.

- **Preventive practices for eyes, kidneys and feet.** Detection and treatment of diabetic eye disease with laser therapy can reduce the development of severe vision loss by an estimated 50% to 60%. Comprehensive foot care programs can reduce amputation rates by 45% to 85%.

What is needed?

In ideal circumstances, Latino Americans with diabetes will have their disease under good control and be monitored frequently by a health care team knowledgeable in the care of diabetes.

- **Patient education is critical.** People with diabetes can reduce their risk for complications if they are educated about their disease, learn and practice the skills necessary to better control their blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and receive regular checkups from their health care team. Smokers should stop smoking, and overweight Latino Americans should develop moderate exercise regimens under the guidance of a health care provider to help them achieve a healthy weight.
- People with diabetes, with the help of their health care providers, should set goals for better control of blood glucose levels, as well as blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- **Health care team education is vital.** Because people with diabetes have a multi-system chronic disease, they are best monitored and managed by highly skilled health care professionals trained with the latest information on diabetes to help ensure early detection and appropriate treatment of the serious complications of the disease. A team approach to treating and monitoring this disease serves the best interests of the patient.