



# F.A.C.E. DIABETES

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE  
TO FEARLESSLY MANAGING  
YOUR DIABETES

## F.A.C.E. DIABETES

Fearless African-Americans Connected and Empowered



# WHY UNDERSTANDING TYPE 2 DIABETES IS IMPORTANT FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects millions of people worldwide. Compared with the general U.S. population, African-Americans are especially hard hit by the disease. Nationwide, approximately 3.7 million African-Americans aged 20 years or older have been diagnosed with diabetes, and many more may be living with the disease without knowing it. Each person living with diabetes faces a personal journey with unique challenges every day. But with the right tools, support, and information, along with the care you receive from your healthcare team, you can learn to better manage your type 2 diabetes and take control of your health. If you have or think you may be at risk for diabetes, it's time to become empowered and face it FEARLESSLY. The information in this brochure will help you learn basic facts about diabetes and includes tips to help you successfully manage the condition, including:

- **What is diabetes?**
- **Risk factors and common symptoms**
- **Seeking the right support**
- **Diabetes support resources and services**

Keep in mind, this brochure is meant to serve as a guide to help you manage your type 2 diabetes; it is not meant to take the place of regular visits to and counsel from your healthcare professional.



## WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a serious disease characterized by levels of blood sugar (glucose) that are too high resulting from your body's inability to properly produce or use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps sugar move from the blood into the cells where it can be used for energy. Over time and without proper care, blood sugar levels that remain too high may lead to serious complications. Some examples of complications may include damage to your eyes, kidneys, or nerves.

There are 2 basic types of diabetes—type 1 and type 2.

**Type 1:** Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, and was previously known as juvenile diabetes. With type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin.

**Type 2:** Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes and is usually diagnosed in older adults. With type 2 diabetes, either the body does not produce enough insulin or the cells in the body do not properly use the insulin that is produced.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF DIABETES IS LEFT UNTREATED?** If left untreated, diabetes can lead to serious and sometimes life-threatening complications. These may include blindness, kidney failure, loss of limbs, heart disease, stroke, and nerve damage.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Compared to non-Hispanic Whites, African-Americans with type 2 diabetes are:

- Almost 50 percent more likely to develop eye disease that can cause blindness
- Up to 5.6 times more likely to suffer from kidney disease
- Nearly 3 times more likely to have lower-limb amputations due to diabetes

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW SOME OF THE COMMON

#### TYPE 2 RISK FACTORS

- Being overweight
- Not exercising
- Family history of diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Stress/lifestyle factors
- Race or ethnicity

#### TYPE 2 COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Feeling tired often
- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Losing weight while continuing to eat
- Blurry vision
- Potentially no symptoms at all

# TYPE 2 DIABETES MYTHS AND FACTS

Myth #1: If I have diabetes, I can't enjoy any of the foods I love—  
Southern cooking and Sunday dinners are definite no's!

**Fact:** **If eaten as part of a healthy meal plan and/or combined with exercise, you can still enjoy the foods you love.** However, if you have diabetes, it is important to make an effort to eat in a healthy manner and in moderation. Diabetes experts recommend that you eat foods that are low in fat, salt, and sugar. Try whole grain foods, vegetables, and fruit instead of processed alternatives that can be high in fat and sugar.

Myth #2: Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.

**Fact:** **Eating sugar does not cause diabetes.** Diabetes is caused by many factors including your family history, weight, and lifestyle. That said, a healthy and balanced meal plan that is low in fat and moderate in sugar is important for everyone to follow. If you are at risk for diabetes, it is especially important to be aware of what you eat.

Myth #3: I can't run, and running is the only form of exercise that can help me manage my diabetes.

**Fact:** **Being active is necessary for overall better health.** If you have diabetes or think you may be at risk for diabetes, being active every day is particularly important to staying healthy. However, if you don't enjoy running, don't worry! There are plenty of other activities that you can do to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle—and they may not even seem like exercise. Take a walk, go dancing, swim, use the stairs, join a local aerobics class—just get moving!

Myth #4: I'm thin and weight has never been a problem for me. I am not at risk for diabetes.

**Fact:** **Not true!** There are a combination of factors including lifestyle and family history that play a part in your risk for diabetes. However, being overweight does increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Maintaining a healthy weight and eating healthy foods are key to managing your type 2 diabetes.



## SEEKING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

You don't need to face diabetes alone. Start your journey to better type 2 diabetes management with the help of a dedicated healthcare team—a team of professionals focused on you! Your healthcare support team will be key to helping you learn how to live a healthy life.

Next, you will find an overview of some of the key members that may be part of your support team and can play a specific role in your overall diabetes care. There are also examples of some important questions to ask each of them.

### **PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR ENDOCRINOLOGIST:**

Central to your support team is a certified healthcare professional such as a primary care physician or an endocrinologist. You may feel most comfortable visiting your regular primary care physician—the same one you see for check-ups or when you get sick—or you may be referred to an endocrinologist, a doctor who is specially trained to treat diabetes. He or she can put you in touch with other diabetes specialists if needed and can address questions about diagnosis, treatment, medication, and lifestyle changes that can help you take care of yourself.

#### **Questions for your Physician:**

- What tests will you do at regular office visits?
- Can you refer me to a diabetes educator or dietitian to help me with my nutrition and exercise plans?
- Will I need medication to manage my diabetes?

### **DIABETES EDUCATOR:**

A diabetes educator is someone who is specially trained to teach people about diabetes. Diabetes educators may come from a variety of health-related backgrounds. They may be pharmacists, dietitians, nurses, and exercise physiologists, among others. The important thing to know is that diabetes educators can help you learn how to manage the day-to-day aspects of diabetes and answer questions you may have about medication, diet, and exercise.

#### **Questions for your Diabetes Educator:**

- Can you help me identify a nutrition and exercise plan that may work for my lifestyle?
- How do I check and keep track of my blood sugar levels?
- What should I do if my blood sugar levels are too high or remain elevated?
- What problems should I watch for?
- How do I know that I am taking care of my diabetes properly?

# SEEKING THE RIGHT SUPPORT (CONT'D)

## REGISTERED DIETITIAN:

A dietitian is trained in nutrition and many have experience working with people with diabetes. Your dietitian can help you determine what foods are best for you based on your weight, lifestyle, health goals, and other health conditions.

### Questions for your registered dietitian:

- How can I incorporate some of the foods I love into a healthy diet?
- How can I make sense of food labels?
- How do I balance a healthy diet with exercise?
- How can I have a healthy diet that can help me lose weight?

## EYE DOCTOR:

You may not realize it, but an eye doctor should be a key part of your healthcare support team. Diabetes can affect your eyes. This can lead to eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts, and/or retinopathy and may even lead to blindness. If you have diabetes, you should see your eye doctor at least once a year to check for eye disease. Early detection and treatment of eye complications due to diabetes may slow down eye disease.

### Questions for your Eye Doctor:

- What can I do to protect my eyes?
- Are there symptoms of eye disease that I should be watching for?
- How often should I have my eye exams?
- How is my eye disease treated?

## FOOT SPECIALIST:

Another under-recognized impact of diabetes is poor blood flow and nerve damage in the lower legs and feet. This may lead to infections that can turn into serious complications, including amputation. When you visit your primary care physician for a check-up, he/she should be checking your feet for any signs of these problems. If needed, your primary care physician may refer you to a foot specialist, also known as a podiatrist, who is specially trained to treat these problems.

### Questions for your Foot Specialist:

- How can I protect myself from sores and infections of the feet and legs?
- How does exercising affect my lower limbs and feet?
- What kind of daily care should I do for my feet?



## **DIABETES IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY.**

It's important to remember that you are not alone. There are a number of resources available that are there to support you on your journey. The list below includes resources that will provide you with more information about type 2 diabetes, help you stay active, become involved in your community, and connect with others who may be facing the same challenges as you.

### **F.A.C.E. Diabetes**

[www.face-diabetes.com](http://www.face-diabetes.com)

### **American Association of Diabetes Educators**

[www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)

### **American Diabetes Association**

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

### **CDC Diabetes Public Health Resource**

[www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)

### **Eli Lilly and Company: Lilly Diabetes**

[www.lillydiabetes.com](http://www.lillydiabetes.com)

### **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov>



## ABOUT THE F.A.C.E. DIABETES INITIATIVE

The Fearless African-Americans Connected and Empowered (F.A.C.E.) Diabetes initiative is a grassroots movement for African-Americans in the United States to help people achieve greater success in managing their type 2 diabetes. Supported by Eli Lilly and Company and national and local health advocacy organizations, the F.A.C.E. Diabetes initiative will host a series of community-based events that provide practical information and advice to help people change their attitudes, behavior, and lifestyle, particularly as it relates to nutrition/cooking, physical activity, health, and overall well-being.

## ABOUT LILLY DIABETES

For more than 85 years, Lilly has been a worldwide leader in pioneering industry-leading solutions to support people living with and treating diabetes. Lilly introduced the world's first commercial insulin in 1923 and remains at the forefront of medical and delivery device innovation to manage diabetes.

Lilly is also committed to providing solutions beyond therapy—practical tools, education, and support programs to help overcome barriers to success along the diabetes journey. At Lilly, the journey of each person living with or treating diabetes inspire ours. For more information, visit [www.lillydiabetes.com](http://www.lillydiabetes.com).

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