

The Prevalence of Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease condition resulting in altered levels of blood sugar (glucose). It develops either because of a deficiency in the ability of the pancreas to produce insulin (Type 1 Diabetes), or because of an inability of the cells in the body to use insulin efficiently (Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance).

It is estimated that there are approximately 21 million Americans with diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and the American Diabetes Association state that the prevalence of diabetes has risen 5% annually since 1990.

Diabetes is the fifth deadliest disease in the United States, with Type 2 diabetes accounting for approximately 90-95% of all diagnosed cases. The total annual economic cost of diabetes is in excess of \$135 billion, representing 1/10th of every health care dollar spent.

The condition of diabetes brings with it several serious complications. Diabetes can lead to severely debilitating or fatal complications such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, and limb amputations. Periodontal disease has been suggested as the 6th complication of diabetes.

The most common cause of death for diabetics is coronary heart disease. Heart disease in diabetic individuals appears earlier in life and is more often fatal. The age-adjusted death rate per 1,000 person-years is 28.4 for diabetic men and 10.2 for nondiabetic women age 40-77 years at baseline, and 10.5 and 4.1 for diabetic and nondiabetic women, respectively. (see <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/america/pdf/chapter19.pdf>) This means that on average a diabetic over age 40 is 250% times more likely to die a premature death due to heart disease complications than their nondiabetic counterparts.

- 2 in 5 people with diabetes have eye damage that can cause blindness. It is the leading cause of blindness in people ages 20-74.
- 1 in 2 with diabetes has nerve damage, which can lead to foot ulcers and foot amputations. This accounts for 60% of all non-traumatic lower-limb amputations.
- 1 in 4 people with diabetes have chronic kidney disease. Diabetes is the leading cause of end-stage renal disease.
- 1 in 3 diabetics have periodontal disease.
- 2 in 3 people with diabetes die from heart disease and stroke.
- Diabetics are 2-4 times more likely to suffer stroke.