

# HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter  
[www.astate.edu/conhp](http://www.astate.edu/conhp)



## Diabetes and Obesity

### Overview

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we are eating ourselves into a diabetes epidemic. It's becoming clear that the conveniences of modern life also contribute to the development of both diabetes and obesity. For example, sedentary lifestyles and the popularity of high fat, high energy diets and convenient foods put people at very high risk for obesity – but do they also cause diabetes? Of the people diagnosed with type II diabetes, about 80 to 90 percent are also diagnosed as obese.

### Type 1 Diabetes

This type usually starts in childhood. Your pancreas stops making insulin. You will have type 1 diabetes for life. The main things that lead to it are:

- **Family history.** If you have relatives with type 1

diabetes you should get checked. A simple blood test can diagnose it.

- **Diseases of the pancreas.** They can slow its ability to make insulin.
- **Infection or illness.** Some infections and illnesses, mostly rare ones, can damage your pancreas.

### Type 2 Diabetes

With this type, your body can't use the insulin it makes. This is called insulin resistance. Type 2 usually affects adults, but it can begin at any time in your life, and is affecting more children each year. The main things that lead to it are:

- **Obesity or being overweight.** Research shows this is a top reason for type 2 diabetes. Because of the rise in obesity among U.S. children, this type is affecting more school-aged children.
- **Impaired glucose tolerance.** Prediabetes is

a milder form of this condition. It can be diagnosed with a simple blood test.

- **Insulin resistance.** Type 2 diabetes often starts with cells that are resistant to insulin. That means your pancreas has to work extra hard to make enough insulin to meet your body's needs.
- **Ethnic background.** Diabetes happens more often in Hispanic/Latino Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Alaska natives.
- **High blood pressure.** That means blood pressure over 140/90.
- **Low levels of HDL** ("good") cholesterol and high levels of triglycerides.
- **Gestational diabetes.** If you had diabetes while you were pregnant, you had gestational diabetes. This raises your chances of getting type 2 diabetes later in life.

- **Sedentary lifestyle.** You exercise less than three times a week.
- **Family history**
- **Polycystic ovary syndrome.** Women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) have a higher risk.
- **Age.** If you're over 45 and overweight or if you have symptoms of diabetes, talk to your doctor about a simple screening test.

### Arkansas Facts

In Arkansas nearly 760,000 adults are obese. Nearly a quarter of a million adults in Arkansas have diabetes and 85% of diabetics are overweight. The cost of diabetes in Arkansas for 2007 was estimated at \$1.4 billion. Diabetes causes 38% of all kidney failure and 40% of diabetics will develop chronic kidney disease (CKD).

In 2009, national Medicare expenditures for people with CKD and diabetes were \$18 billion. The savings to Medicare for each kidney disease patient who does not go on dialysis is estimated to be \$250,000.

When comparing the average annual total cost of health care for normal weight and obese Arkansas, the cost increased with age at a greater rate for the obese group. The cost difference was **8%** at ages 10-14 progressively growing to **104%** by ages 65-74. Annual

medical costs for obese adults were \$1429 higher than for people of a healthy weight in 2006.

Reducing the average BMI of Arkansans by only 5 percent could lead to health care savings of more than **\$2 billion** in 10 years and **\$6 billion** in 20 years, while also preventing thousands of cases of stroke, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and cancer.

### Prevention

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't short-term dietary changes; it's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and regular physical activity.

- **Assessing Your Weight** (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/yweight/assessing/index.html>) BMI and waist circumference are two screening tools to estimate weight status and potential disease risk.
- **Healthy Weight** (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/yweight/index.html>) Learn about balancing calories, losing weight, and maintaining a healthy weight.
- **ChooseMyPlate Website** Look up nutritional information of foods, track your calorie intake, plan meals, and find healthy recipes.
- **Physical Activity Basics** (<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/in>

[dex.htm](#)) Learn about different kinds of physical activity and the guidelines for the amount needed each day.

- **Tips for Parents**

(<http://www.cdc.gov/health/yweight/children/index.html>) Learn about the seriousness of childhood obesity and how to help your child establish healthy behaviors.

### References

- <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/index.html>
- <http://www.healthyactive.org/TheFacts.html>
- <http://www.webmd.com/diabetes/guide/risk-factors-for-diabetes?page=2>

### Other News:

\*\*If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at [hanrahan@astate.edu](mailto:hanrahan@astate.edu).

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The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or [hanrahan@astate.edu](mailto:hanrahan@astate.edu). Produced by Kelsie Clark, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.