

“African Americans are at the highest risk of experiencing complications from diabetes that include cardiovascular disease, blindness, amputation, and kidney failure (American Diabetes Association)

“African Americans are twice as likely to suffer from diabetes-related blindness” (American Diabetes Association).

“African Americans are 1.5 to 2.5 times to suffer from lower limb amputations” (American Diabetes Association).

“African Americans with diabetes are 2.6 to 5.6 times more likely to suffer from kidney disease” (American Diabetes Association).

According to National Diabetes Education Program, it is estimated that cost for treatment of diabetes is \$132 billion annually (November, 2005).

Informative Diabetes Web sites:

<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/content.aspx?ID=3097>

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/type1and2/what.htm>

<http://www.ndep.nih.gov>

<http://ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/WTMD/diabetes.htm>

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/riskfortype2/index.htm>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/tracking/od05.htm>

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-statistics/african-americans.jsp>

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/type1and2/care.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AMH/factsheets/diabetes.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/>

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-research/ada-funded.jsp>

<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/patient/dpp/dpps.htm>

Diabetes and African Americans



According to the Department of Health and Human Services/The Office of Minority Health, diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal.

People with diabetes have problems converting food to energy. After a meal, food is broken down into sugar called glucose, which is carried by the blood to cells throughout the body. Cells use the hormone insulin, made in the pancreas to help them process blood glucose to energy (November 2005).

According to the National Diabetes Education Program, 20.8 million Americans have diabetes (7 percent of the U.S. population). 6.2 million don't know they have diabetes. Every year 1.5 million people 20 years of age or older are diagnosed with diabetes (November, 2005).

At least 2.7 million African Americans (11.4%) 20 years of age or older have diabetes.

There are three types of diabetes: (1) Type 1 diabetes, (2) Type 2 diabetes, and (3) Gestational diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes: the pancreas no longer creates insulin needed to process Glucose. The body's immune system attacks or destroys its own insulin that it creates. Although Type 1 diabetes can occur at anytime, it usually is diagnosed in early childhood or young adulthood. People who have Type 1 diabetes must take insulin either by injection or pump otherwise their condition can result in falling into a coma or even death (Department of Health and Human Services 2005).

Type 2 diabetes: the body's pancreas produces insulin but insufficient amounts or the body does not use it appropriately to break down sugar in the body. People over the age of 40 usually develop Type 2 diabetes, however the condition can occur in people of younger ages (Department of Health and Human Services 2005).

Gestational diabetes: when women are pregnant, sometimes a shortage of insulin occurs. Women who develop gestational Diabetes are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life, usually within

the next 20 years (Department of Health and Human Services 2005).

Signs or symptoms of diabetes: extreme thirst, frequent urination, increased hunger or fatigue, rapid weight loss, difficulty healing sores, dry, itchy skin, loss of feeling or tingling in your feet, blurred eyesight (National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC).

Diagnosis: Diabetes can be diagnosed during an office visit with a doctor or physician after being tested with a fasting blood glucose test or an oral glucose test. Your doctor can inform you of what stage of diabetes you may be in, if at all. A normal glucose level should range between 70 and 120 (National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC).

Treatment: Treatment for diabetes varies depending on the type of diabetes that you have.

People who have Type 1 diabetes must check their glucose levels numerous times daily and take insulin either by pump or injection to maintain an adequate level of insulin in their body. They should eat a specific diet and exercise daily (National Diabetes Education Program).

People who have Type 2 diabetes should take their medication for diabetes, be watchful of their diet, exercise, maintain their cholesterol and blood pressure and if recommended by their doctor, take an aspirin daily (National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC).

Women who develop gestational diabetes while pregnant can sometimes control their glucose or sugar levels by diet or sometimes have to take insulin shots until the completion of their pregnancy. After the birth of the baby, the glucose levels usually return to normal but they should keep a watch on their glucose levels because developing gestational diabetes is an

“Prepared by Cicily J. Roberts, for Pch201-10, Spring 2006”

indicator that they may develop Type 2 diabetes later in life.

Affects: Having diabetes affects other areas of the body. Diabetes affects the eyes, kidneys, teeth, nerves, and gums (National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC).

Effects: Having diabetes can lead to kidney failure, blindness, stroke, nerve problems, gum infections, or even amputations of body parts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), heart disease, and damaged blood vessels (National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC).

Although everyone can be affected by diabetes, African Americans are diagnosed and suffer from the effects of diabetes in the largest numbers.

Diabetes is a serious health problem but one that can be controlled.

According to the Center for Disease Control, diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States (2005).

“3.2 million African Americans (20 years or older) or 13.3 percent have diabetes, one third whom are undiagnosed “ (National Diabetes Education Program 2005).

According to the National Diabetes Education Program, 20.8 million Americans have diabetes (7 percent of the U.S. population). 6.2 million don't know they have diabetes. Every year 1.5 million people 20 years of age or older are diagnosed with diabetes (November, 2005).

“More than 200, 000 diabetes-related deaths occur per year” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2002).

Healthy People 2010 state that “in the United States, diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic amputations, blindness among the working class of adults and kidney failure (end-stage renal disease).