

TRENDS IN DIABETES: A REVERSIBLE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic condition characterized by high blood sugar levels (fasting blood sugar ≥ 126 mg/dL). There are three general forms of diabetes:

- Type 1 – the pancreas produces little or no insulin
- Type 2 – the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin
- Gestational diabetes - women without previously diagnosed diabetes develop high blood sugar during pregnancy

Common symptoms of diabetes include blurry vision, unexplained weight loss, increased thirst, and/or increased urination. In its early stages, people with diabetes may not have any symptoms. However, if left untreated, diabetes can damage nerves and blood vessels, leading to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, loss of sensation in extremities and amputation.

Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes

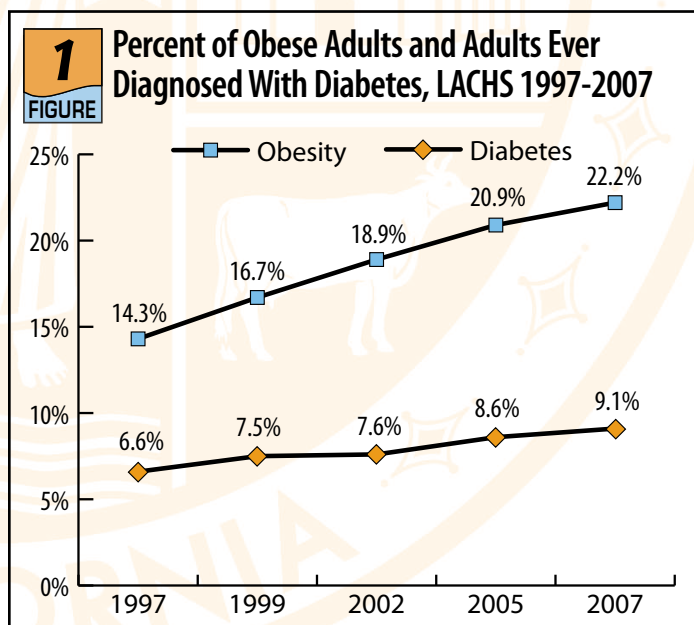
Type 2 diabetes accounts for over 90% of all diabetes cases. Obesity is the most important risk factor, that you can change, for type 2 diabetes. In LA County, adult obesity has increased from 14.3% in 1997 to 22.2% in 2007 (Figure 1). Other risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes are age, heredity, race/ethnicity, history of diabetes during pregnancy, and physical inactivity.

Most type 2 diabetes, and the condition that leads to it, pre-diabetes (fasting blood sugar 100-125 mg/dL), is preventable.

Who Has Diabetes in Los Angeles County?

Diagnosed diabetes has been increasing around the world as well as in LA County. Results from the Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS) found that for adults:

- The rate of diabetes has increased from 6.6% in 1997 to 9.1% in 2007, affecting about 650,000 adults in 2007
- In 2007, 12.8% of Latinos, 11.4% of African Americans, 9.0% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, and 5.7% of whites had diabetes
- An even steeper increase in diabetes was seen among adults living in households below the federal poverty level⁵ (FPL), from 9.0% in 1997 to 14.7% in 2007
- In 2007, adults living in households below FPL were twice as likely to have diabetes compared to those living in households at or above 200% FPL



⁵ Federal Poverty Level (FPL) thresholds are based on the US Census and at the time of interview. For example, the 2007 data were based on the 2006 FPL, which for a family of four (2 adults, 2 dependents) corresponded to annual incomes of \$20,444 (100% FPL), \$40,888 (200% FPL), and \$61,332 (300% FPL).

A GUIDE TO DIABETES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

What You Can Do To Prevent Diabetes

- Eat healthy foods:
 - ◆ whole grains (whole wheat bread, oatmeal)
 - ◆ fruits and vegetables (orange, yellow, green & leafy, like broccoli and spinach)
 - ◆ lean cuts of meat, fish, or poultry and low-fat dairy products
 - ◆ limit foods high in salt, sugar, and grease
- Exercise: be physically active 30-60 minutes on most days of the week
- Lose excess weight through a healthy diet and increased physical activity

For more information about . . .

- **Diabetes** go to:
www.diabetes.org
www.caldiabetes.org
<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov>
www.ndep.nih.gov
- **Healthy meals** go to:
www.mypyramid.gov
- **Physical activity** go to:
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone
- **Quitting smoking** go to:
www.laquits.com
call **1-800-NO-BUTTS**



If You Already Have Diabetes

In addition to following the recommendations “**What You Can Do To Prevent Diabetes**”:

- Participate in an educational or support group for people with diabetes to gain knowledge, and learn problem-solving and coping skills to successfully manage your diabetes and reduce the risk of complications
- See your health care provider regularly and make sure that your diabetes is being treated according to current recommendations
- Get a flu shot every year
- Get a dilated eye exam and complete foot exam at least once a year
- Check your feet daily for cuts, blisters or swelling
- Brush and floss your teeth every day to prevent problems with your teeth and gums
- If you smoke, seek help to quit
- Women of childbearing age should consult medical care to make sure their blood sugar is tightly controlled, to avoid complications to the mother and the baby in case of a pregnancy; until then, they should use an effective form of contraception



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For additional information about the L.A. County Health Survey, visit: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha

The Los Angeles County Health Survey is a periodic, population-based telephone survey that collects information on sociodemographic characteristics, health status, health behaviors, and access to health services among adults and children in the county. The 2007 survey collected information on a random sample of 7,200 adults and 5,728 children. The survey was conducted for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health by Field Research Corporation and was supported by grants from First 5 LA, the Tobacco Control and Prevention Program, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Program and various Department of Public Health programs.