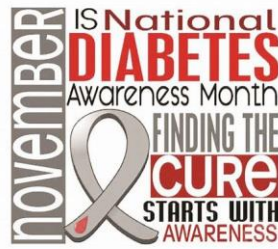


## Parish Nurse Notes – November 2020 is Diabetes Awareness Month



Diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy.

Most of the food you eat is broken down into sugar (also called glucose) and released into your bloodstream. When your blood sugar goes up, it signals your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy.

If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it makes as well as it should. When there isn't enough insulin or cells [stop responding to insulin](#), too much blood sugar stays in your bloodstream. Over time, that can cause serious health problems, such as [heart disease](#), [vision loss](#), and [kidney disease](#).

There isn't a cure yet for diabetes, but losing weight, eating healthy food, and being active can really help. Taking medicine as needed, getting [diabetes self-management education and support](#), and keeping health care appointments can also reduce the impact of diabetes on your life.

### Diabetes by the Numbers

- **34.2 million** US adults have diabetes, and 1 in 5 of them don't know they have it.
- Diabetes is the **seventh leading cause** of death in the United States.
- Diabetes is the **No. 1** cause of kidney failure, lower-limb amputations, and adult blindness.
- In the last **20 years**, the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than **doubled**.

## **Types of Diabetes**

There are three main types of diabetes: [type 1](#), [type 2](#), and [gestational diabetes](#) (diabetes while pregnant).

### **Type 1 Diabetes**

Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake) that stops your body from making insulin. Approximately 5-10% of the people who have diabetes have type 1. Symptoms of type 1 diabetes often develop quickly. It's usually diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults. If you have type 1 diabetes, you'll need to take insulin every day to survive. Currently, no one knows how to prevent type 1 diabetes.

### **Type 2 Diabetes**

With type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels. About 90-95% of people with diabetes have type 2. It develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults (but more and more in children, teens, and young adults). You may not notice any symptoms, so it's important to get your blood sugar tested if you're at [risk](#). Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, eating healthy food, and being active.

### **Gestational Diabetes**

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. If you have gestational diabetes, your baby could be at higher risk for health problems. Gestational diabetes usually goes away after your baby is born but increases your risk for type 2 diabetes later in life. Your baby is more likely to have obesity as a child or teen, and more likely to develop type 2 diabetes later in life too.

### **Prediabetes**

In the United States, 88 million adults—more than 1 in 3—have [prediabetes](#). What's more, more than 84% of them don't know they have it. With prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes raises your [risk](#) for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The good news is if you have prediabetes, a CDC-recognized [lifestyle change program](#) can help you take healthy steps to reverse it.