Now that the holiday season is approaching, food will be on everyone’s mind. For people with health conditions, paying attention to what is eaten and how much is eaten is very important. Diabetes is one such condition that needs to be monitored during this time of year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), November is national diabetes month, so this issue of Health and Safety News is devoted to passing along the information the CDC shares (http://www.cdc.gov/Features/LivingWithDiabetes/).
Diabetes Awareness This National Diabetes Month

Diabetes: if you don't live with it yourself, then it's likely you have a family member or friend who does. This November during National Diabetes Month, ask yourself if you're at risk of type 2 diabetes and take steps to prevent it. Diabetes affects 26 million Americans, with 19 million people diagnosed and 7 million undiagnosed. And an estimated 79 million American adults aged 20 years or older have prediabetes, which puts them at high risk for developing the disease.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ that lies near the stomach, makes a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our bodies. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood.

What are the types of diabetes?

- **Type 1 diabetes**, which was previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or juvenile-onset diabetes, may account for about 5% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.
- **Type 2 diabetes**, which was previously called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes, may account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.
- **Gestational diabetes** is a type of diabetes that only pregnant women get. If not treated, it can cause problems for mothers and babies. Gestational diabetes develops in 2% to 10% of all pregnancies but usually disappears when a pregnancy is over.
- **Other specific types of diabetes** resulting from specific genetic syndromes, surgery, drugs, malnutrition, infections, and other illnesses may account for 1% to 5% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

Prediabetes is an elevated blood glucose level that is not quite high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes, but is higher than normal. One in three American adults has prediabetes, and most do not even know they have it. Many people with prediabetes who do not lose weight or do moderate physical activity will develop type 2 diabetes within 3 years.
Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and amputations of the foot, toe or leg. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

**Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes**

You are at increased risk for developing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are 45 years of age or older.
- Are overweight.
- Have a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Are physically active fewer than three times per week.
- Ever gave birth to a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds.
- Ever had diabetes while pregnant (gestational diabetes).

**What Can You Do?**

Researchers are making progress in identifying the exact genetics and "triggers" that predispose some individuals to develop type 1 diabetes, but prevention remains elusive.

A number of studies have shown that regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is associated with obesity.

The CDC-led [National Diabetes Prevention Program](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assistance/ndpp.html) is an evidence-based lifestyle change program for preventing type 2 diabetes.
- It can help people cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes in half.
- The Diabetes Prevention Program research study showed that making modest behavior changes helped participants lose 5% to 7% of their body weight—that is 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person.
- These lifestyle changes reduced the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58% in people with prediabetes.
- Participants work with a lifestyle coach in a group setting to receive a 1-year lifestyle change program that includes 16 core sessions (usually 1 per week) and 6 post-core sessions (1 per month).

You don't have to do this alone. Prevent or delay type 2 diabetes today by learning about its risks and making lifestyle changes with a group in your community.