

IMPORTANT THINGS for African American Women to Know About Diabetes

Diabetes is common among African-American women.

- Diabetes affects nearly 12% of all Black women ages 20 and older, and is listed as the 4th leading cause of death for all ages.
- Black women are 2 – 4 times more likely than White women to have diabetes. Black women are especially at risk due to high rates of obesity, lack of physical activity, and stress.
- As Black women age, the risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases. Type 2 diabetes affects 1 in 4 Black women ages 55 years and older.
- While Black women ages 20 and older represent 15% of all diabetes cases, they only account for 13% of the total female population in the US.

African-American women are diagnosed with all kinds of diabetes.

- Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 – 95%, and Type 1 accounts for 5 – 10%, of all cases.
- Black women are less likely to develop gestational diabetes, but those who do have the greatest risk (almost 10 times greater than other race and ethnic groups) of developing type 2 diabetes later.

Women with diabetes are more apt to experience depression.

Women with any type of diabetes have a higher risk of depression compared to women without diabetes. Black women may experience depression with sadness, anxiety, and helplessness, especially when living with chronic illness.

Diabetes (specifically prolonged high BG) is linked to other health conditions, including:

- Eye disease (diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema (DME), glaucoma, cataracts)
- Kidney damage and chronic kidney disease (CKD)
- Heart disease (cardiovascular disease, or CVD)
- Neuropathy (nerve damage)

Treatment Options

- Diabetes education classes, information, and resources are incredibly important.
- A medical team with expertise to support the physical and mental aspects of the disease.
- Blood glucose monitoring, with goals for time in range
- Medications – oral and injectable, including insulin
- Food choices, including carb counting
- Exercise choices
- Peer support – in groups, with individuals, and/or online.

Bottom Line

There is a good chance that you know another woman at risk of, or already living with, diabetes. While there is no cure for diabetes, with treatment diabetes can be managed. Research shows that lifestyle changes with medication as directed, can help manage type 2 diabetes and reduce complications.

