



Diabetes: Myths and Facts

Myth: “I can’t really have diabetes, I have no symptoms!”

Fact: Many people with diabetes have no symptoms. You can have diabetes for many years and not know it. Even if you do not have any symptoms, diabetes can cause damage to your body.

Myth: “Now that I have diabetes, I am likely to have low blood sugars. If I feel funny, I should probably eat some candy.”

Fact: There are some diabetes medications that could cause a low blood sugar. It is important for you to understand how your medicine works. If you feel funny, you should check your blood sugar to see if it is too low. If your blood sugar is low, then follow the “rule of 15” in the Hypoglycemia handout.

Myth: “I can never drink alcohol (beer, wine or liquor) again”

Fact: Most people with diabetes can still enjoy alcohol in moderation. (1-2 standard drinks in a day). Ask your doctor to be sure.

Myth: “As long as it is whole wheat pasta, I can eat all I want.”

Fact: Even though whole grains are a good source of fiber, they still contain carbohydrates that do affect your blood sugar. Whole grains are a part of a healthy meal plan for everyone, but watch your serving size.

Myth: “It is dangerous for people with diabetes to exercise.”

Fact: Exercise is an important part of staying healthy for everyone, especially people with diabetes. Learn about how exercise affects your blood sugar and plan ahead.

Myth: “Avoiding all “white” foods (white bread, potatoes, pasta) will cure my diabetes.”

Fact: Diabetes does not just go away and there is room for all foods in a healthy meal plan. Whole grains are higher in fiber and healthier than processed foods.

Myth: “Diabetes always causes blindness (or kidney disease, or amputations).”

Fact: Research has shown that diabetes can cause blindness, kidney disease, or amputations, but when blood sugars are well managed you greatly reduce your chances of these diabetes complications. Many people with diabetes live a long, healthy life.

Myth: “I’ve tried to quit smoking 100 times. I’ll never be able to quit.”

Fact: Don’t quit quitting! It may take many tries to break this habit, but there are huge benefits. Try this resource for help: www.michigan.gov/tobacco.

Myth: “Taking insulin means your diabetes is out of control.”

Fact: For some people, oral medications are not the answer to managing their blood sugars—insulin may be the best way to manage blood sugars.

Myth: “Diabetes is not ‘life threatening’.”

Fact: Diabetes is a serious disease. The more you learn about diabetes, the better you can take care of yourself and prevent complications. Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of heart disease and stroke.

Myth: “Insulin will make me gain weight.”

Fact: Eating too many calories will make you gain weight. Insulin is a natural hormone that helps regulate your blood sugar and gives your body energy.