



Ten Diabetes Myths

With so much information circulating about diabetes, it is often easy to become confused or misinterpret. Here is a quick rundown of ten common misperceptions and the real scoop.

Myth 1: You can catch diabetes from someone else.

Diabetes is not contagious. It cannot be caught like a cold or the flu. However, there does seem to be a genetic link, especially for type 2 diabetes.

Myth 2: People with diabetes can't eat sweets or chocolate.

Sweets and desserts can be eaten by people with diabetes as long as it is a small part of a healthy meal plan combined with exercise.

Myth 3: Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.

Diabetes is caused by a combination of genetic and lifestyle factors, although being overweight does increase the risk for developing type 2 diabetes, and you will put the pounds on by eating too many sweets and sugary beverages.

Myth 4: People with diabetes should eat special diabetic foods.

People with diabetes should eat the same healthy meal plan that everyone should be eating—low fat (especially saturated and trans fats), moderate salts and sugars, meals based on whole grains vegetables and fruits.

Myth 5: If you have diabetes you should omit starchy foods such as bread potatoes and pasta.

Portion size is key in eating starchy foods. Most people with diabetes can eat 3-4 servings of whole grain breads, cereals pasta, rice and starchy vegetables (potatoes, yams, peas and corn) at each meal. Work with a dietitian to learn what one serving is and how many you can have.

Myth 6: People with diabetes are more likely to get colds and other illnesses.

People with diabetes are no more likely to get colds than others. Flu shots are recommended because infections interfere with blood glucose management.

Myth 7: I can't eat cake or cookies unless they're sugar-free.

Sugar-free desserts still contain carbohydrates that turn into glucose. A large portion of sugar-free cookies doesn't equal a small portion of regular cookies. Portion size is still key.

Myth 8: Insulin causes weight gain, and because obesity is bad for you, insulin should not be taken.

The benefits of glucose management with insulin have been proven in trials and studies, even at the risk of weight gain. In addition, weight gain can be prevented or minimized.

Myth 9: Fruit is a healthy food; therefore, it is OK to eat as much as I wish.

Fruit contains fiber and vitamins and minerals and should be included in a healthy meal plan. Most people should have two or three servings daily. The amount, frequency and types of fruits should be discussed with a dietitian.

Myth 10: Type 1 diabetes is worse than type 2 because it requires insulin. I'm type 2 so it's not as serious.

Both types of diabetes should be taken seriously. Type 1 is an autoimmune disease in which the pancreas no longer makes insulin and requires insulin therapy. Type 2 may also require insulin therapy. Care for both types of diabetes includes monitoring blood sugars regularly and taking care of your heart health.

Referenced from the American Diabetes Association