

Type 2 Diabetes and Your Family History

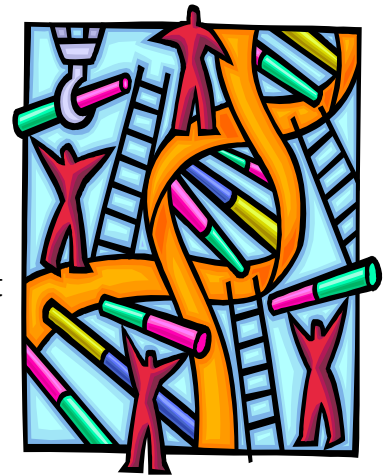
Does your mother, father, brother, sister, or child have Type 2 Diabetes? You're not alone. A recent survey found 30% of Oregonians have a close family member with diabetes*.

November is both Diabetes Awareness Month and Family Health History Month. Take two leaps ahead this month:

- Record your family health history
- Learn how to lower your chance of getting diabetes if you have a family history or other risk factors

What is a Family Health History?

Like diabetes, many health problems run in families. A Family History, or Family Health History, is a record of you and your close family's health. By taking your family health history and sharing it with your health care provider, you can learn what health problems you may be at higher risk for and how to prevent or reduce your chances of developing diabetes and other health problems.



How can I take my Family Health History?

One of the most common tools used to take a family health history is the Surgeon General's My Family Health Portrait at <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/> or 1-888-275-4772. The CDC National Office of Genomics and Public Health also has information on taking a family history at <http://www.cdc.gov/genomics/public/famhistMain.htm>.

How does my family history affect my chance of getting diabetes?

Diabetes is caused by both genetic and other factors such as body weight, diet, and physical activity level. Families share their habits, environments, and lifestyles, as well as their genes. If you have a parent or brother or sister with type 2 diabetes, your chance of developing diabetes is about double that of someone with no family history. In general, the more people in your family with diabetes, the higher your chance of getting diabetes.** Fortunately, there are many things you can do to lower your chance of developing this disease.

Besides family history, what else could put me at risk for diabetes?

- **Lifestyle factors:** Obesity, poor diet, and too little physical activity increase risk.
- **Age:** Risk increases with age. People 45 and older are at highest risk.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanic and Latino Americans, and Pacific Islanders are at increased risk.
- **Gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing greater than 9 pounds:** Increases risk.
- **Polycystic ovarian syndrome:** Increases risk.
- **High blood pressure:** Increases risk if you are overweight.
- **Abnormal lipid levels:** Increases risk if you are overweight.

What can I do to reduce my chance of getting diabetes?

- **Lose weight** if you are overweight.
- **Eat a balanced diet** including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and lean meats.
- **Get active.** Moderate activity 30 minutes at least 3 days of the week has significant benefits.
- **Talk to your health care provider about your family history and screening.** The American Diabetes Association recommends that diabetes testing be considered at a younger age and/or more often in people with a parent, brother/sister, or child with type 2 diabetes. Your health care provider can review your health history and see what screening is right for you.

Where can I get more information?

Oregon Diabetes Program www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/diabetes

Oregon Genetics Program www.oregongenetics.org

American Diabetes Association www.diabetes.org

CDC National Office of Public Health Genomics www.cdc.gov/genomics

US Surgeon General Family History Website www.hhs.gov/familyhistory

* 2005 Oregon BRFSS data

** Harrison TA et al. Family history of diabetes as a potential public health tool. Am J Prev Med 2003;24(2):152-9 and Practical Genetic Counseling, Peter S Harper, 6th edition.