



Understanding the Link between Diabetes and Heart Disease in Hispanic Americans



Diabetes is a growing epidemic for Hispanic Americans:

- Of the 30 million Hispanic/Latinos living in the United States, about 2 million had been diagnosed with diabetes in 2000.
- About 10.2 percent of all Hispanic Americans have diabetes.
- On average, Hispanic Americans are 1.9 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age.
- Diabetes is twice as common in Mexican American and Puerto Rican adults as in non-Hispanic whites. The prevalence of diabetes in Cuban Americans is lower, but still higher than that of non-Hispanic whites.
- Diabetes is particularly common among middle-aged and older Hispanic Americans. For those age 50 or older, about 25 to 30 percent have either diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes.
- As in all populations, having risk factors for diabetes increases the chance that a Hispanic American will develop diabetes. Risk factors seem to be more common among Hispanics than non-Hispanic whites. These factors include: a family history of diabetes, gestational diabetes, impaired glucose tolerance, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Heart disease is the most common and deadly complication of diabetes:

- The San Antonio Heart Study found that for both Latinos and Latinas, those with diabetes had higher rates of heart disease deaths and all other deaths than those without diabetes.
- A least 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke. And yet, only one in four Hispanic/Latinos with diabetes know they are at risk for heart disease.
- Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease or suffer a stroke than people without diabetes.
- Middle-aged people with type 2 diabetes have the same high risk for heart attack as people without diabetes who already have had a heart attack.
- People with diabetes are more likely to die from a heart attack and are more likely than those without diabetes to have a second event.
- About 70 percent of people with diabetes also have high blood pressure.
- Smoking doubles the risk for heart disease in people with diabetes.

To reduce the risk of heart disease and other complications from diabetes, people at risk should:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods that are low in salt and fat, like fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week to stay at a healthy weight.
- Take steps to control blood glucose levels, blood pressure and cholesterol to reduce the risks of complications from diabetes, especially heart disease. The recommended tests and target numbers for most people with diabetes are:

Test	Target	How Often?
Blood Glucose (A1C*)	Below 7*	At least twice a year
Blood Pressure	Below 130/80	At every visit
Cholesterol (LDL)	Below 100	At least once a year

*The A1C (A-one-C) test measures your average blood glucose over the last 3 months.

- Take medicines as prescribed.
- Ask about aspirin therapy for prevention of heart disease.
- If they smoke, work with a doctor, family and friends to help quit.