



Two Reasons to Prevent Diabetes

By Dr. James R. Gavin III
Chairman, National Diabetes Education Program
President, Morehouse School of Medicine

Millions of Americans are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. In fact, about 40 percent of U.S. adults ages 40 to 74 – millions of whom are Asian American and Pacific Islander – currently have pre-diabetes, a condition that raises a person's risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Thanks to the findings from the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program clinical trial, we now know that diabetes is not inevitable. By losing a small amount of weight, those who are at risk can stop or delay the onset of this devastating disease.

Studies show that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who are overweight are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes, and some groups, including Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Japanese living in Hawaii, are twice as likely to have diabetes as whites of similar age.

Clearly, it is critical for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to take control of this epidemic. Failure to take action now will threaten their future with disability and premature death. The National Diabetes Education Program's (NDEP) *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent type 2 Diabetes* public education campaign has a tailored message for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: "Two Reasons I Find Time to Prevent Diabetes...My Future and Theirs." This campaign will help increase the community's awareness that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed.

The campaign provides free information and tools—all designed to help people at risk take the small steps needed to stop diabetes in its tracks. Customized tip sheets, in English and seven Asian and Pacific Islander languages, appeal to the strong family ties that can help motivate

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to focus on improving their health.

Since family members of people with diabetes are at increased risk, everyone in the family can get involved and can benefit from taking steps to lose weight through eating healthy and getting regular physical activity. Being healthy allows all of us to enjoy a better quality of family life, especially as we age.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders may not be aware that the weight they think is healthy can increase their risk for type 2 diabetes. Even a small weight gain can increase a person's risk. That is why the National Diabetes Education Program is encouraging Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to have their weight checked by a health care provider and to find out if they are at risk for diabetes.

Help your loved ones and your community to prevent diabetes by embarking on a new, healthier lifestyle. No one needs to run a marathon. Big rewards can be achieved by losing 5 to 7 percent of body weight through healthy eating and getting 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week.

Diabetes is serious—but it is also preventable. We now have scientific evidence that with modest weight loss, diabetes prevention is proven, possible, and powerful.

For more information about diabetes prevention, call 1-800-438-5383 and get your free GAME PLAN for preventing type 2 diabetes or visit <http://www.ndep.nih.gov>. Materials are available in various Asian and Pacific Islander languages.

James R. Gavin III, M.D., Ph.D., is Chairman of the National Diabetes Education Program, a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Gavin is President of Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.