



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Diabetes Goes South

State-Specific Incidence of Diabetes Among Adults — United States, 1995–1997, 2005–2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Susan Laird] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Susan Laird, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

In the United States, the South has always been known for its warm weather and southern hospitality. But according to a recent CDC report, the South might soon become known for its high incidence of diabetes. Over a recent ten-year period, the number of people in the United States who were diagnosed with diabetes increased dramatically. This trend was particularly high in the South.

Dr. Karen Kirtland is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss diabetes. Welcome to the show, Dr. Kirtland.

[Dr. Kirtland] It's a pleasure to be here.

[Susan Laird] Dr. Kirtland, approximately how many people in the United States have diabetes?

[Dr. Kirtland] Nearly 24 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, and about twenty five percent don't know that they have the disease.

[Susan Laird] Is age a factor in the development of diabetes?

[Dr. Kirtland] Yes. Your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, which constitutes about 90 to 95 percent of diagnosed diabetes, does increase with age. There are other risk factors that include overweight and obesity, high blood glucose, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels, physical inactivity, and smoking.

[Susan Laird] So why are we seeing such an increase of cases, especially in the South?

[Dr. Kirtland] Risk factors such as physical inactivity and obesity that are associated with type 2 diabetes are higher in the South when compared to other regions in the U.S. It is important to remember that these risk factors are important throughout the United States. In our study, diabetes increased across all regions and in most of the 33 states we examined. Prior research has also shown that diabetes is increasing throughout most of the population in the U.S. That means diabetes is a problem throughout the country.

[Susan Laird] So what are the symptoms of diabetes?

[Dr. Kirtland] Symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, irritability, and blurry vision. People having any of these symptoms should be checked for diabetes.

[Susan Laird] Is there anything people can do to prevent the onset of diabetes?

[Dr. Kirtland] People with a high risk of diabetes who lose weight and increase their physical activity can delay or prevent the disease and may be able to return their blood glucose to normal.

[Susan Laird] Is it curable?

[Dr. Kirtland] Diabetes cannot be cured, but it can be managed and controlled. It is important for people with diabetes to adopt healthy lifestyles, including eating a healthy diet, losing excess weight, and exercising.

[Susan Laird] So how is diabetes treated?

[Dr. Kirtland] Many people with type 2 diabetes can control their blood glucose by following a healthy meal plan and exercise program, losing excess weight, and taking either oral medications, insulin, or both. People with type 1 diabetes have to use insulin. Many people with diabetes also need to take medications to control their cholesterol and blood pressure.

[Susan Laird] Where can listeners get more information about diabetes?

[Dr. Kirtland] They can go to the website www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dr. Kirtland, thanks for sharing this information with our listeners today.

[Dr. Kirtland] It's been a pleasure; thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, that's it for this week's show. Be sure and join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Susan Laird for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.