



Media Advisory  
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**Type 2 Diabetes on the Rise in American Indian Children:  
Health Groups Enter National Diabetes Month Advising Teens to “Stay Fit”**

Recent health studies show a growing number of American Indian children—as young as age 10—are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, the type of diabetes usually associated with adults. Since much of this trend can be linked to excess weight and sedentary lifestyles, the National Diabetes Education Program, a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Association of Indian Physicians is sending a message to American Indian teens to *get active and stay fit*.

“Until recently, type 2 diabetes was rarely seen in people under age 30,” said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, chair of the National Diabetes Education Program’s American Indian work group. “Even young people who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop serious diseases, like diabetes. We want teens to know that regular physical activity and staying fit can go a long way toward helping to prevent this disease and its serious complications,” Roubideaux said.

Diabetes is one of the most serious health challenges facing American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States today. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, nine percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have diagnosed diabetes. On average, American Indians and Alaska Natives are 2.8 times as likely to have diagnosed diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Moreover, up to 50 percent of Pima Indians over age 35 have type 2 diabetes—the highest prevalence rate in the world.

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) and the Association of American Indian Physicians launched a national awareness campaign last year to address this critical situation. The *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign stresses the seriousness of diabetes and urges people to control their disease.

“The goal of the *Control Your Diabetes. for Life.* campaign is to let American Indians and Alaska Natives with diabetes know that by controlling their blood sugar levels they can reduce their risks for the devastating complications of diabetes, improve their overall health, and enjoy a better quality of life,” said Roubideaux. “We realize that messages to American Indian youth now must include the message of staying fit and getting regular physical activity which can help prevent this devastating disease.”

For more information on the NDEP’s *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign, contact the NDEP at 800-860-8747 or visit the NDEP website at <http://ndep.nih.gov> on the Internet.

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