



## 5 Myths (and a Truth) About Diabetes

### Fight diabetes stigma with facts

There's a prevalence of false information when it comes to type 2 diabetes. We're setting the record straight. Here's what's real and what's not when it comes to diabetes:

**False:** People with type 2 diabetes brought it on themselves.

Lifestyle factors, including weight and physical activity, can contribute to your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, but genetics play a key role, says Floyd Russak, MD, medical director of East-West Health Centers in Greenwood Village, Colorado.

**False:** Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is caused by the body's autoimmune attack, which kills insulin-producing beta cells. Type 2 diabetes is caused by the body's inability to use the insulin it produces and progresses so that less insulin may be made over time. Eating sugar doesn't start either type of disease process.

**False:** Type 2 diabetes can be permanently cured.

People with type 2 can sometimes control their diabetes with diet, exercise, and/or medicine to near-normal blood glucose levels. Bariatric surgery has also been proven to help bring type 2 diabetes to normal blood glucose levels, according to several studies. But even with close-to-normal blood glucose levels, defending themselves against diabetes and related factors such as high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels will continue to be part of their lives.

**False:** People with type 2 diabetes who need to go on insulin have failed.

"That's just the nature of diabetes. Sometimes you need medicine to reverse things that aren't working metabolically in your body," says Russak. Type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease. Needing to take medication or insulin is not a failure; it's a crucial step to protect your health.

**False:** People with diabetes can't eat sweets or must eat a specific diet.

Everyone with diabetes is different, and there is no one "diabetes diet." People can work with their diabetes care team to create a meal plan that's right for them.

**True:** EARLY diabetes diagnosis can help to identify and prevent diabetes complications, also consistently follow your physician's treatment plan.



If questions call EMPLOYERS' HEALTH COALITION AT: 479-434-4145 or 479-434-4154