

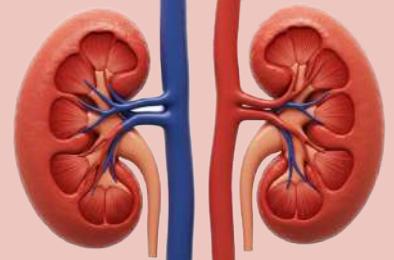
# Health-pulse magazine

**"Kidney Disease on the Rise Among Ghana's Youth- Expert Cautions.**  
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**Understanding pregnancy-related diabetes, its risks, prevention, and post-birth management**  
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## HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

The Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), based in Ghana, is a non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing healthcare across West Africa. Addressing the uneven distribution of medical resources, HCOWAA advocates for regional cooperation through a Health Alliance that unites healthcare stakeholders to create a cohesive health community.

With a mission to improve health outcomes in West Africa, HCOWAA facilitates collaboration, innovation, and research among professionals, leveraging collective resources to enhance healthcare services, policies, and access. HCOWAA envisions a resilient West African healthcare system where institutions and professionals lead groundbreaking research, foster innovation, and influence policies that elevate regional healthcare.

Through initiatives like establishing a regional healthcare database, launching research projects, and hosting policy roundtables, HCOWAA builds strong networks to drive healthcare advancements. Advocacy efforts focus on equitable access, supporting vulnerable populations, and addressing healthcare disparities. The organization's objectives include fostering research and innovation, supporting health policy reforms, and integrating medical equipment manufacturers with healthcare facilities.

HCOWA also facilitates training programs, academic exchanges, and research grants, ensuring members are equipped with knowledge and skills to address regional health challenges effectively. Networking events like the HCOWA Medical and Health Industry Investment Summit & Expo connect professionals, offering a platform for partnership and knowledge sharing.

HCOWAA's commitment extends to partnerships with international health organizations and academic institutions, which amplify its impact by introducing global best practices and strengthening West African healthcare infrastructure. Collaborative efforts with international partners promote training, research, and infrastructure upgrades for health facilities, pharmaceutical establishments, and clinics.

In addition, HCOWAA's magazine partnerships, including an MoU with Health Pulse Magazine, provide platforms to publish relevant content, share insights, and enhance visibility for ongoing initiatives. Through these combined efforts, HCOWAA aims to foster a collaborative healthcare environment that not only addresses urgent health challenges but also builds a sustainable, inclusive healthcare future for West Africa.

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# Turning the Tide on Diabetes in Africa

Each year on 14 November, the world unites to observe World Diabetes Day, a global call to confront one of the most pressing health challenges of our time. This year, the World Health Organization's theme — "Diabetes Across Life Stages" — reminds us that diabetes is not confined to adulthood or old age. It is a lifelong condition that can affect anyone, from children to older adults, requiring a sustained, integrated response across every phase of life.

Across Africa, the numbers tell a sobering story. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that over 24 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live with diabetes — a figure expected to double within two decades if urgent action is not taken. In Ghana and many neighboring countries, diabetes has quietly evolved into a national health emergency, disrupting families, livelihoods, and economies. Yet, despite this escalating crisis, the response has often been fragmented and underfunded.

This year's theme is both a warning and a call to action. "Diabetes Across Life Stages" recognizes that from the first diagnosis in childhood, through the reproductive and working years, and into older age, people living with diabetes deserve continuous, compassionate, and coordinated care. It demands policies that ensure access to insulin and essential medicines, education on nutrition and self-management, and environments that make healthy living possible.

Access to affordable insulin and consistent care remains a matter of life and death for many

Africans. Too many families face heartbreak choices — between buying food or life-saving medication. Health systems must therefore shift toward universal, people-centered care, with trained diabetes educators, dietitians, and mental health professionals integrated into routine services.

Equally vital is prevention. Ultra-processed foods and sedentary lifestyles are fuelling the epidemic. Governments must enforce sugar-sweetened beverage taxes, regulate harmful marketing, and strengthen national diabetes policies that encourage healthy diets and active living. Schools and workplaces must also become safe, supportive spaces for people with diabetes — especially children who need access to insulin and understanding peers and teachers.

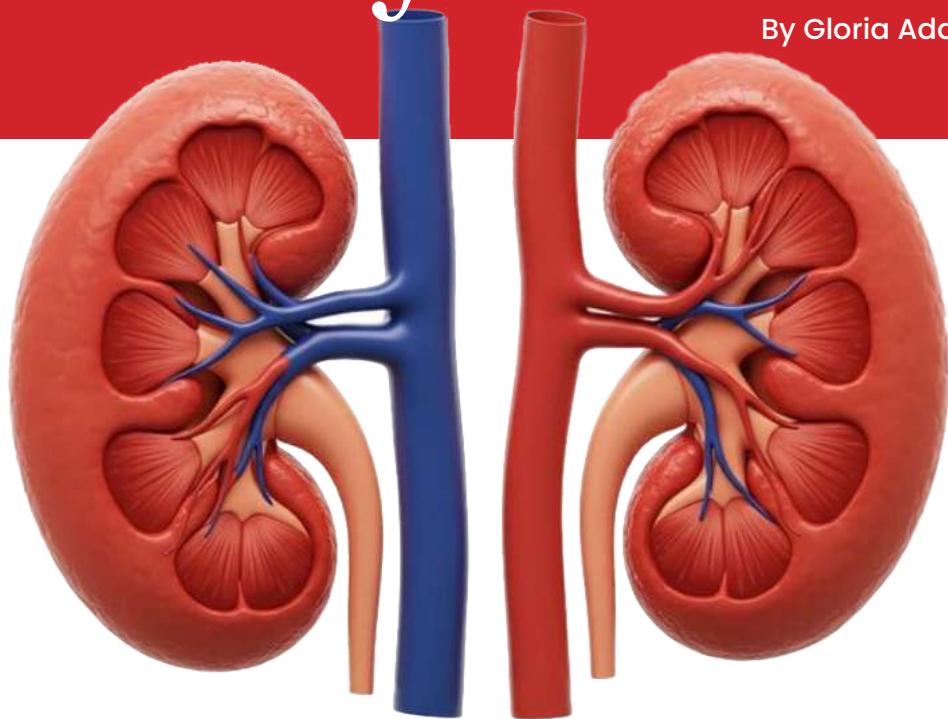
Beyond the clinics, this fight must extend to communities, where stigma and misinformation too often prevail. The media, civil society, and corporate sector each have a role: to educate, empower, and inspire. Diabetes advocacy must move from annual commemoration to year-round action — a collective commitment to wellbeing at every life stage.

Africa cannot afford to lose another generation to preventable diabetes complications. Turning the tide requires investment, empathy, and inclusion — ensuring that every person, regardless of age or income, has access to the care and dignity they deserve.

**This World Diabetes Day, let us recommit to building a continent where living with diabetes does not mean living in despair, and where prevention and wellbeing are truly within everyone's reach.**

# Your Kidneys and Diabetes

By Gloria Addo



The kidneys are vital organs responsible for filtering waste and excess fluid from the blood, balancing electrolytes, and producing hormones that support healthy blood pressure and red blood cell formation. However, their delicate structures can easily be damaged—especially when blood sugar levels remain high. This is why diabetes has become the leading cause of chronic kidney disease (CKD) worldwide.

When a person has diabetes, the body either does not produce enough insulin or cannot use it effectively, leading to high glucose levels in the bloodstream. Over time, this excess sugar damages the tiny blood vessels and filtering units (called nephrons) inside the kidneys. As the kidneys work harder to clean the blood, they gradually become less effective. The result is diabetic kidney disease, a condition that progresses slowly and often without symptoms in the early stages.

In Ghana and many other countries, cases of diabetes are rising due to changes in diet, reduced physical activity, and increasing rates of obesity. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of their diabetes status until complications appear. Kidney

disease becomes noticeable only when significant damage has already occurred, making early detection crucial.

Signs of kidney damage may include swelling of the legs or face, fatigue, frequent nighttime urination, and changes in urine color or volume. However, the best way to detect kidney issues early is through routine medical tests, particularly urine and blood tests that measure kidney function.

Protecting kidney health begins with managing blood sugar levels. People living with diabetes should work closely with healthcare professionals to monitor glucose, take prescribed medications consistently, and follow a balanced diet low in salt and processed sugars. Drinking adequate water, exercising regularly, avoiding smoking, and limiting alcohol also help preserve kidney function.

Kidney health is not something to take for granted. By understanding the strong link between diabetes and kidney damage and adopting healthier habits early we can protect these essential organs and improve long-term health outcomes. Healthy kidneys mean a healthier life.

**For individuals without diabetes, prevention is key. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of developing both diabetes and kidney disease.**

# Tat Kai Wai Hong and HCOWA Collaboration Training Seminar

The Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) Headquarters came alive with collaboration and knowledge exchange as Tat Kai Wai Hong Pharmaceutical Company based in China partnered with HCOWA to host a specialized training seminar on the integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in Women's Health and Gynecology.

The half-day session, held on Friday, October 31, 2025, brought together healthcare professionals, herbal practitioners, and women's health advocates to deepen understanding of how TCM principles and herbal therapies can support the prevention and treatment of common gynecological conditions affecting women across Africa.



## Integrating Ancient Wisdom with Modern Women's Health

The seminar opened with an insightful presentation by Dr. Sandra Ashong on the Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). She emphasized its holistic approach to health – balancing Yin and Yang, harmonizing the Five Elements, and restoring the natural flow of Qi (vital energy).

Participants explored how these ancient principles offer a unique framework for addressing women's health challenges such as menstrual irregularities, infertility, menopause, and chronic infections.

Dr. Ashong also highlighted the growing role of TCM in integrative medicine, noting its success in complementing Western medical approaches for improved outcomes in reproductive and gynecological care.

## Key Herbal Medicines and Formulas in Gynecology

A central highlight of the seminar was the introduction of key TCM herbal medicines and topical preparations, notably the Baofukang Gel – a pure herbal formula derived from Zedoary Turmeric Oil and Borneolum, widely used in the management of various gynecological conditions.

Presenters discussed the scientific basis of its anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and mucosal-repairing properties, supported by clinical evidence showing high efficacy in treating vaginitis, cervical erosion, and HPV-related conditions.

Participants were also introduced to other classical TCM formulations that help restore hormonal balance, reduce inflammation, and enhance reproductive health among women.

# Seminar to Promote Women's Health with T.C.M

By Gloria Addo

## Practical Demonstrations and Expert Guidance

The event featured live demonstrations and guided sessions led by Dr. Sandra Ashong and Ms. Lin Qi, General Manager of Tat Kai Wai Hong Pharmaceutical Company, manufacturers of the featured herbal products.

Together, they showcased TCM techniques such as acupuncture, moxibustion, and cupping therapy, along with proper methods of applying topical preparations like Baofukang Gel. Participants engaged in hands-on exercises and interactive discussions on how to combine herbal medicine with modern diagnostic techniques to achieve holistic care.

The session fostered a collaborative atmosphere, blending traditional wisdom with modern clinical insight.

## Empowering Women's Health Through Knowledge

In his closing remarks, Mr. Prince Opoku Dogbey, Vice President of the HCOWA Association, emphasized the importance of capacity-building programs that bridge traditional and modern medical systems. The Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) continues to serve as a leading platform for healthcare collaboration, innovation, and professional training. Through initiatives like this TCM seminar, HCOWA strengthens knowledge exchange between African and Chinese medical experts, advancing the development of integrative healthcare solutions for West Africa and beyond.



# Gestational Diabetes

Understanding pregnancy-related diabetes, its risks, prevention, and post-birth management

By Richeal Elikem Dovia



Pregnancy is one of life's most remarkable journeys but it also brings unique health challenges that require extra care. One such condition is gestational diabetes, which develops during pregnancy when blood sugar levels rise due to hormonal changes that affect insulin use. Though usually temporary, it deserves serious attention because it impacts both mother and baby.

Gestational diabetes occurs when pregnancy hormones reduce the body's ability to use insulin effectively, leading to high blood glucose levels. It usually appears between the 24th and 28th week of pregnancy, even in women with no previous history of diabetes.

## Who Is at Risk?

Any pregnant woman can develop gestational diabetes, but risk factors include:

- Family history of type 2 diabetes
- Being overweight before pregnancy
- Having polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- Being over 30 years old
- Previous pregnancy with a large baby (over 4 kg or 9 lbs)
- Belonging to African, Asian, or Hispanic ethnic groups

## Why It Matters

If left unmanaged, gestational diabetes can cause complications such as high birth weight, premature delivery, preeclampsia, and a greater

need for cesarean birth. For the baby, it may lead to low blood sugar, breathing issues, and an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Fortunately, gestational diabetes can often be prevented or controlled through healthy lifestyle choices.

Key steps include:

- **Balanced nutrition:** Focus on whole grains, lean proteins, vegetables, and limited portions of fruit. Avoid processed foods and sugary drinks.
- **Regular exercise:** Gentle activities like walking, swimming, or prenatal yoga help regulate blood sugar and boost overall health.
- **Routine screening:** Glucose testing between 24 and 28 weeks allows for early detection and timely treatment.
- **Medical monitoring:** Women diagnosed may need blood sugar tracking, dietary changes, and sometimes insulin therapy.

## After Birth: Continued Care

Gestational diabetes typically resolves after delivery, but women who've had it face a higher risk of type 2 diabetes later. Postpartum care should include:

- A blood sugar test 6–12 weeks after childbirth
- Continued healthy eating and regular activity
- Annual diabetes screening

## Doctor's Tips for Expectant Mothers

1. Ask when you'll be screened for gestational diabetes.
2. Track your diet and blood sugar levels.
3. Keep every prenatal appointment.
4. Seek nutrition counseling — small changes make big differences.

**With awareness, timely screening, and proper care, both mother and baby can thrive.**



## “Kidney Disease on the Rise Among Ghana’s Youth - Expert Cautions.

**Nephrologist and Physician Specialist, Dr. Akosua Ampomah Asomaning**, has sounded an alarm over the growing number of young Ghanaians being diagnosed with kidney disease. Speaking on GTV’s Breakfast Show, she described the trend as deeply concerning, warning that the condition is increasingly affecting people in their most productive years.

According to Dr. Asomaning, an estimated 13 percent of Ghanaians are currently living with some form of kidney disease. “We are seeing more cases among people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s – the age group that drives the nation’s workforce,” she noted.

She explained that diabetes and hypertension remain the leading causes of kidney failure in Ghana. However, other factors such as genetic disorders, infections, and exposure to harmful substances are also contributing significantly to the surge.

“Many young people are taking unregulated herbal mixtures and toxic substances,” Dr. Asomaning cautioned. “Some are also exposed to heavy metals like lead, found in certain cooking utensils and local brewing processes, which can cause severe kidney damage.”

She further highlighted that the frequent use of recreational drugs, unsafe locally produced alcoholic beverages, and unmonitored consumption of aphrodisiacs are posing additional risks to kidney health.

Describing kidney disease as a “silent killer,” Dr. Asomaning explained that symptoms often appear only when about 90 percent of kidney function has been lost. Warning signs may include

swelling of the legs or face, fatigue, reduced urine output, and high blood pressure.

Adding a human face to the crisis, Baba, a kidney transplant survivor, shared his experience since being diagnosed in 2015.

“Being on dialysis was hell,” he recounted. “I had to undergo treatment three times a week for over three hours each session. Sometimes there were no working machines, and even water for dialysis was a problem.” Baba revealed that the financial burden was immense, but with help from friends, students, and his family – including his wife, who became his donor – he successfully underwent a kidney transplant in 2019. His journey, he said, taught him the importance of regular medical checkups and healthy lifestyle choices.

Dr. Asomaning concluded with a strong appeal to the public:

She emphasized that tackling the growing kidney disease burden requires increased public education, lifestyle modification, and stronger screening programs to identify high-risk individuals early.



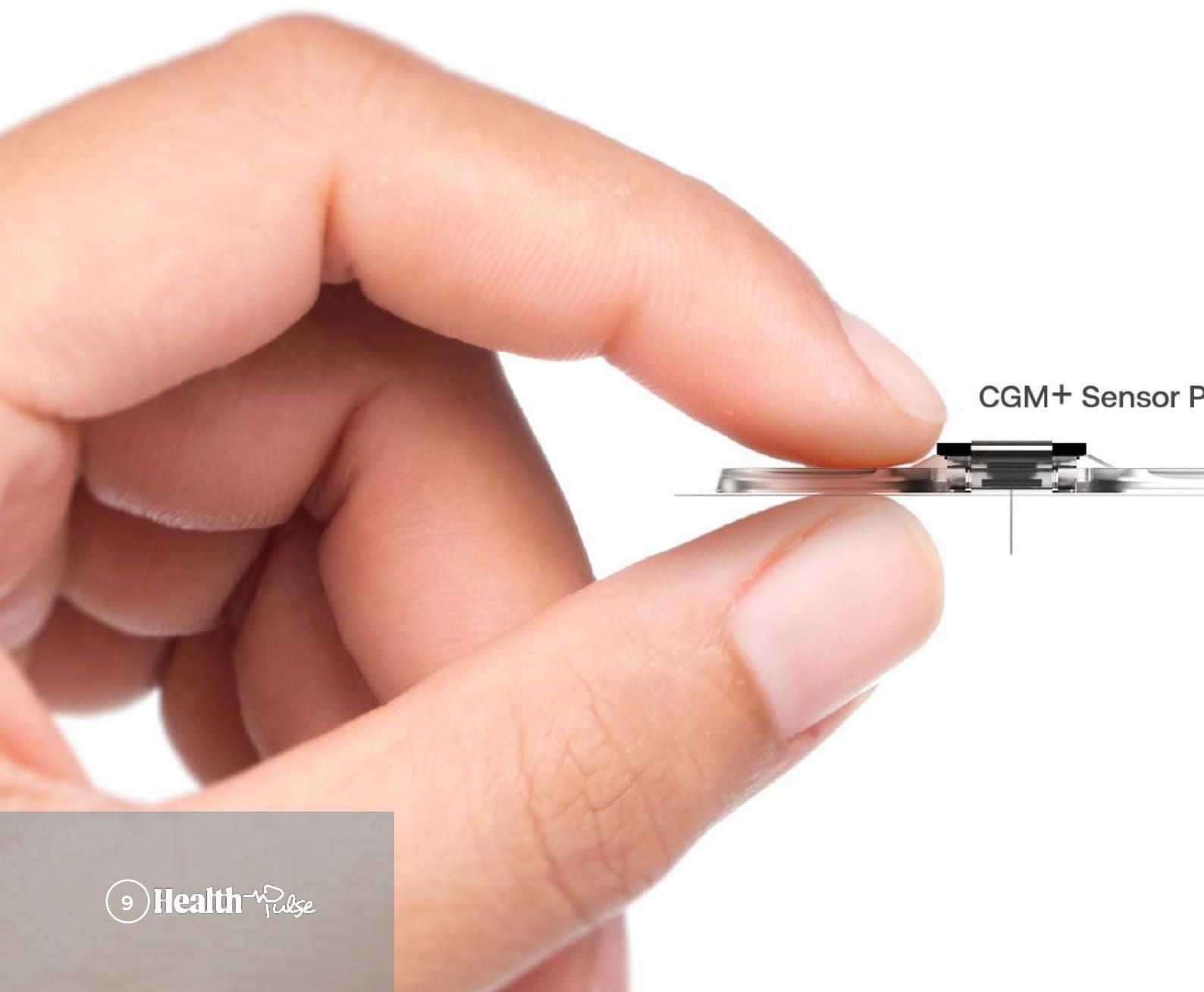
**Avoid self-medication, stay away from harmful substances, and check your blood pressure and sugar levels regularly. Early detection and proper management can save lives and prevent kidney failure.**

# The Future of Blood

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

Diabetes impacts over 500 million people globally, with projections nearing 800 million by 2045. Traditional management finger pricks, manual logs, and clinic visits often falls short, leading to complications like heart disease and neuropathy.

But in 2025, AI apps, wearable tech, and telemedicine are reshaping this landscape, enabling proactive, personalized care that empowers patients and reduces burdens.





# Sugar Management

Wearable devices lead the charge with continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) systems like Dexcom G6 and the new Trinity Biotech CGM+ biosensor. These skin-worn sensors deliver real-time glucose readings to smartphones, alerting users to hypo- or hyperglycemia spikes. Integrated with AI, they predict trends using machine learning on data from activity, diet, and even gut microbiome, flagging prediabetes risks up to four years early outpacing standard HbA1c tests. A 2025 study shows CGM+AI combos improve time-in-range by 20%, cutting A1C by 0.5% on average. Beyond glucose, smartwatches from Apple and Fitbit now monitor vitals like heart rate and stress, partnering with hospitals for seamless remote oversight.

AI apps amplify this data deluge into actionable insights. Platforms like BlueStar and Gluroo analyze CGM feeds alongside meals and exercise, offering tailored insulin adjustments and carb predictions. Generative AI simulates dietary responses, boosting adherence by 30% in trials. In Asia-Pacific, apps reinforce self-management via education modules, with machine learning standardizing primary care

interventions. Users on X rave about non-invasive wrist monitors from the University of Waterloo, which use AI for needle-free tracking, calling it a "game-changer for daily life."

Telemedicine bridges these tools to experts, expanding access especially in rural areas. Platforms like Ping A Good Doctor in China integrate CGM data for virtual consults, with AI diagnostics enhancing cancer screening and chronic monitoring. The UK's NHS and U.S. hospitals use AI-driven RPM to manage diabetes remotely, reducing readmissions by 15%. In 2025, hybrid models combine wearables with AR/VR for immersive coaching, while Big Data from EHRs refines predictions.



atch Module



# Africa Unites to End Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B by 2030

African health leaders, policymakers, and civil society groups have renewed their commitment to ending the mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B by 2030.

The pledge was made at the inaugural Triple Elimination Conference (TEC) held from 21–23 July 2025 in Kampala, Uganda.

The meeting brought together health experts, government officials, researchers, and advocates to accelerate efforts toward the triple elimination goal, a global initiative championed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure that no child is born with these preventable infections.

Africa remains the region most affected by the three diseases. Over 91 million Africans live with hepatitis, contributing to 1.2 million new infections and 125,000 deaths in 2029 alone. Millions more live with HIV, while syphilis continues to pose significant risks to maternal and child health.

**"Africa remains disproportionately affected by these diseases, which continue to weigh heavily on our public health systems and limit our ability to deliver quality healthcare,"** said Ambassador Amma Twum-Amoah, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development at the African Union Commission (AUC), speaking on behalf of AU Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf.

Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director-General of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), commended Uganda for its leadership and outlined four strategic priorities: building resilient health systems, promoting local manufacturing of vaccines and diagnostics, mobilizing sustainable financing, and strengthening primary healthcare through digital and community-based approaches.

**"Women, children, and communities must be at the heart of our efforts,"** Dr. Kaseya emphasized. "We must empower local champions to combat stigma and ensure accountability."

Delegates endorsed a Call to Action urging AU Member States to develop and fund national elimination plans, ensure 95% of newborns receive a hepatitis B vaccine, and address barriers such as stigma and gender inequality.

The AUC, Africa CDC, AUDA-NEPAD, and Regional Economic Communities were tasked with mobilizing resources, promoting best practices, and supporting local production of health commodities.

The WHO, at the IAS Conference on HIV Science in Kigali earlier in July, launched its first global guidance on integrated triple elimination programmes—marking a unified step toward a generation born free of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B.



# Myth or Fact: Can Diabetes Be Reversed?

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

**Diabetes** has long been considered a lifelong condition, but recent studies and patient experiences have sparked an ongoing debate — can diabetes actually be reversed? The answer depends on the type of diabetes, the stage of diagnosis, and how "reversal" is defined.

According to endocrinologists, Type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune condition in which the body's immune system destroys insulin-producing cells, cannot be reversed. People with this form of diabetes must rely on insulin therapy for life. However, Type 2 diabetes, which develops when the body becomes resistant to insulin or fails to use it properly, can often be managed — and in some cases, sent into remission.

Experts explain that "reversal" of Type 2 diabetes doesn't mean it disappears completely. Instead, it refers to achieving normal blood glucose levels without medication for a sustained period, often through intensive lifestyle changes. Research shows that significant weight loss, particularly through calorie restriction or bariatric surgery, can help restore insulin sensitivity and pancreatic function.

Some health experts note that patients who adopt healthy diets, lose weight, and maintain regular exercise routines can return their blood sugar to normal levels. However, this requires consistency — once poor habits return, the diabetes often does too.

Diet plays a major role. A balanced plan rich in vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains, while avoiding processed sugars and refined carbohydrates, can greatly improve insulin sensitivity. Regular physical activity — at least 150 minutes per week — also helps the body use insulin more effectively.

That said, experts caution against miracle cures or unproven herbal remedies. Diabetes management requires medical supervision, especially for those on medication.

In summary, Type 2 diabetes can be put into remission, but not "cured." Ongoing monitoring, healthy habits, and medical guidance are key to keeping it under control. For those living with diabetes, the message is clear: reversal may be possible, but prevention and consistency remain the most powerful tools in the fight against the disease.





# The Emotional Side of Diabetes:

## Coping with Chronic Illness

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

Diabetes is more than a medical condition; it's an unrelenting mental marathon. In 2025, the International Diabetes Federation reports that 77% of people with diabetes have faced anxiety, depression, or another mental health issue directly tied to their diagnosis, while 79% experience burnout or crushing fatigue from nonstop self-care. For long-term patients, this emotional weight often feels heavier than the disease itself.

Diabetes burnout hits when daily rituals like carb counting, insulin dosing, and endless glucose checks become overwhelming. The CDC notes that 33% of U.S. adults with diabetes live with significant distress, with rates climbing to 40% among those under 45. This exhaustion isn't laziness—it's a signal of overload. A 2025 study links persistent burnout to a 1.5-fold increase in cardiovascular risk, even when A1C is stable.

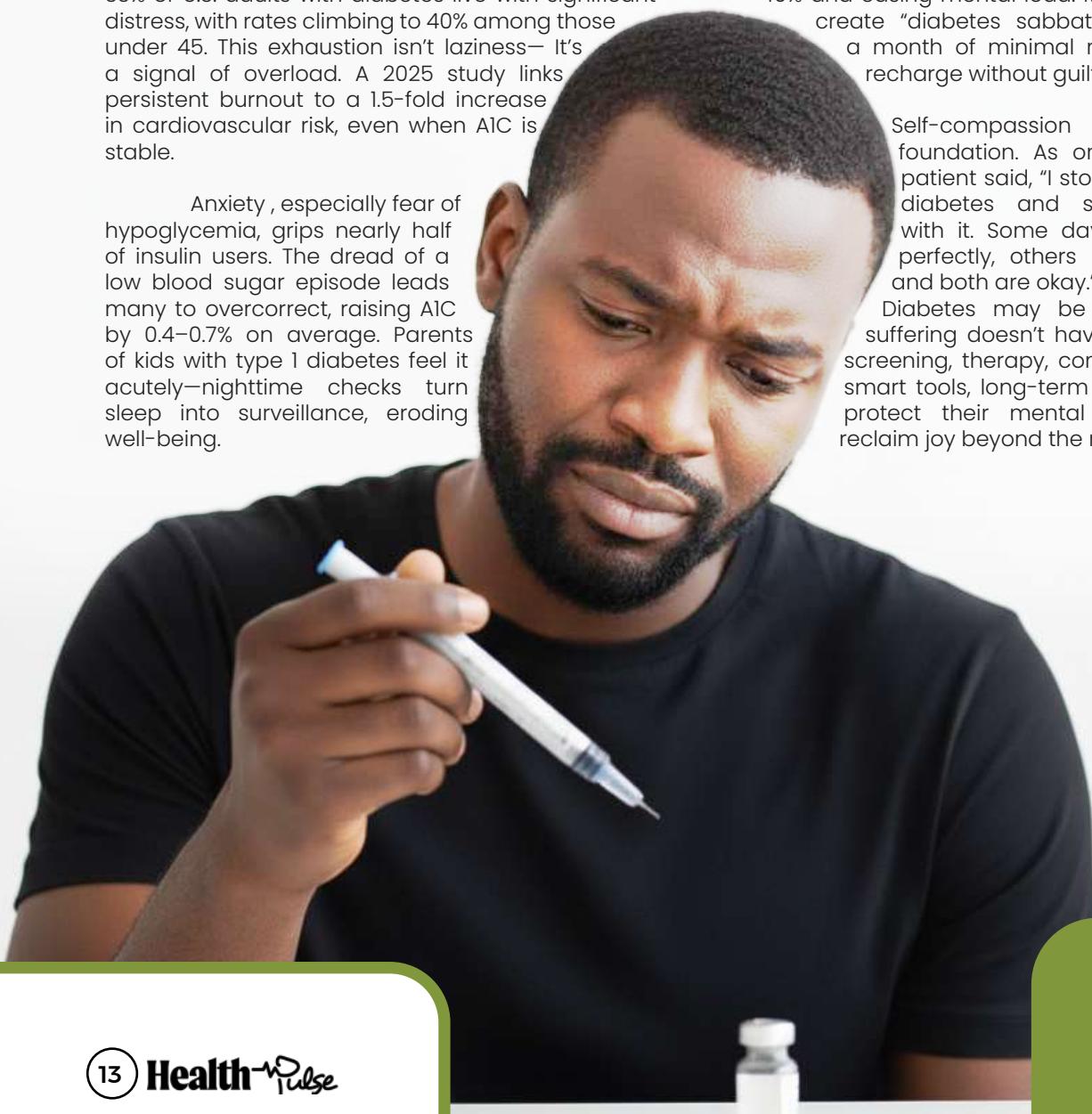
Anxiety, especially fear of hypoglycemia, grips nearly half of insulin users. The dread of a low blood sugar episode leads many to overcorrect, raising A1C by 0.4–0.7% on average. Parents of kids with type 1 diabetes feel it acutely—nighttime checks turn sleep into surveillance, eroding well-being.

Yet hope is real. The 2025 American Diabetes Association Standards of Care now require mental health screening at every visit, using tools like the PAID scale to catch distress early. Diabetes-specific Cognitive Behavioral Therapy cuts burnout by up to 55% in 12 weeks. Peer support groups reduce distress by 35%, offering connection that numbers on a meter can't provide. Mindfulness apps lower stress and improve A1C by 0.4% through guided breathing and reflection.

Technology helps too. Hybrid closed-loop insulin pumps automate dosing, slashing fear of lows by 40% and easing mental load. Many patients create "diabetes sabbaths" one day a month of minimal monitoring to recharge without guilt.

Self-compassion is the foundation. As one long-term patient said, "I stopped fighting diabetes and started living with it. Some days I manage perfectly, others I just survive and both are okay."

Diabetes may be lifelong, but suffering doesn't have to be. With screening, therapy, community, and smart tools, long-term patients can protect their mental health and reclaim joy beyond the numbers.





# Foot Care and Skin Health Tips for Diabetics

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

In the daily rhythm of diabetes management, where numbers and mealtimes often take center stage, the well-being of your skin and feet can sometimes feel like a footnote. Yet, these are the very foundations that carry you through each day. Caring for them isn't about alarmism; it's a practice of gentle and consistent vigilance. Our feet, often bearing our weight without complaint should be pampered and taken care of. For someone with diabetes, reduced circulation and potential nerve damage can mute your body's alerts, turning a minor irritation into a serious challenge. The goal is to become your feet's most attentive advocate.

- Make daily foot inspections a habit, checking for signs like blisters, redness, dryness, or cuts, especially on the soles, between toes, and around heels. Use a mirror or ask for help if needed.
- Wash your feet daily in lukewarm water, dry them thoroughly, and apply a gentle moisturizer to prevent cracking, avoid the areas between toes to prevent fungal growth.
- Always wear well-fitted, supportive shoes, even indoors, to protect your feet from injuries, and break in new shoes gradually.
- Drink plenty of water and manage your blood sugar to hydrate your body from the inside out - stable glucose levels are key to healthy skin.
- Use gentle, pH-balanced cleansers and warm water to clean your skin, pat dry, and moisturize while your skin is still damp to lock in moisture.
- Be mindful of potential risks like cuts or sunburns, and take precautions to avoid complications.

The skin can often reflect internal blood sugar levels. When glucose is consistently high, the skin can become prone to dryness, itching, and a slower healing process. Nurturing your skin is an act of prevention.

Tending to your feet and skin is a profound form of self-respect. It's the understanding that these daily, small acts—the careful inspection, the mindful washing, the choice of supportive shoes acts should be a deliberate practice.

Pay attention to your body, if you have a persistent itch or a crack in the heel, these are not things to ignore. Bring them to the attention of your doctor or podiatrist promptly. This isn't overreacting; it's intelligent, proactive care. By transforming this care into a calming daily ritual, you do more than just prevent wounds, you take care of yourself.





# National Diabetes Association Calls for Unified Wellbeing

The National Diabetes Association of Ghana (NDAG) has launched activities to mark World Diabetes Day 2025, urging a coordinated national response to what it describes as a "silent yet ferocious epidemic." The event, held in Accra, brought together stakeholders, healthcare leaders, and advocates under the global theme, **"Diabetes and Wellbeing."**

Delivering the keynote address, Mrs. Elizabeth Esi Denyoh, Chairperson for the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Africa Region and President of NDAG, called for diabetes to be declared a national health priority. She emphasized that while clinical management remains essential, the new theme reflects a broader understanding of wellbeing — encompassing physical, mental, nutritional, and social dimensions.

"This year's theme is not just a slogan; it is a paradigm shift," Mrs. Denyoh said. "It challenges us to look beyond blood sugar control and focus on the total wellbeing of every person living with or at risk of diabetes."

## A Growing National Health Threat

Mrs. Denyoh described the diabetes situation in Ghana as alarming, citing data from the IDF Diabetes Atlas and local studies showing a steep rise in prevalence. Many people remain undiagnosed, particularly those with pre-diabetes.

She illustrated the crisis with everyday realities — from a taxi driver in Kumasi facing amputation due to poor access to care, to market women losing their sight, and teenagers with Type 1 diabetes struggling with stigma in school. "Behind every statistic is a family in distress," she said, warning that diabetes is eroding productivity and driving families into poverty.

## Focusing on Holistic Wellbeing

The NDAG President outlined four pillars of wellbeing that must shape Ghana's national response:

- **Physical Wellbeing:**

Ensuring access to affordable insulin and essential medicines, expanding screening programs across all health facilities, and strengthening prevention of complications such as kidney failure, stroke, and blindness.

- **Mental and Emotional Wellbeing:**

Integrating psychological support into diabetes care, training healthcare workers to recognize diabetes-related stress, and building peer support networks to reduce isolation.

- **Nutritional Wellbeing:**

Promoting healthier Ghanaian cooking, reducing excessive oil, salt, and sugar in meals, and combating misinformation around traditional diets and processed foods.

- **Social and Economic Wellbeing:**

Encouraging workplaces and schools to adopt supportive policies and ensuring financial protection for families through comprehensive coverage under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

## A National Call to Action

Mrs. Denyoh appealed to the Government of Ghana and the Ministry of Health to fully implement and fund the National Diabetes Policy and Strategy, enforce the Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax, and expand NHIS benefits to cover the full cost of diabetes care, including test strips, insulin, and educator services.

She also called on the Ghana Health Service to train and deploy more diabetes educator nurses and dietitians, while urging Corporate Ghana to integrate wellness programs into their business models and fund public awareness campaigns.



# ed National Response to Diabetes Care and

By Gloria Addo

The media were encouraged to provide sustained, destigmatizing coverage and highlight personal stories to inspire societal action.

## Shared Responsibility

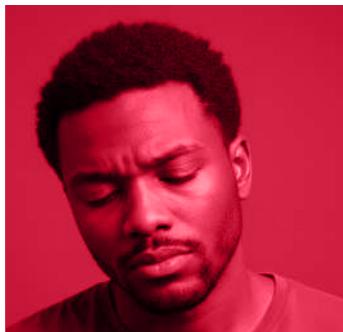
World Diabetes Day, observed globally on November 14, was established by the IDF and World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness about the growing diabetes epidemic. Closing her address, Mrs. Denyoh reminded Ghanaians that diabetes prevention and management require a collective effort.



**“Know your risk, get tested, eat right, and support not stigmatize those living with diabetes,”**

**“Together, we can build a healthier, more resilient Ghana.”**

Mrs. Elizabeth Esi Denyoh, Chairperson for the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Africa Region and President of NDAG

 Article

# Fast Life, Slow Burnout: The Hidden Dangers

In today's world, rushing has become the norm. From juggling work deadlines to managing family responsibilities and social expectations, many of us are stuck in "go mode" — always chasing the next thing on our to-do list. While being productive can feel rewarding, living life on fast-forward comes with a hidden cost: our health.

Constant busyness and multitasking activate the body's stress response, flooding the system with hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. In short bursts, these hormones help us focus and perform. But when stress becomes chronic — as it often does in a nonstop lifestyle — it begins to take a toll. Elevated cortisol levels can weaken the immune system, increase blood pressure, disrupt sleep, and even promote weight gain, particularly around the abdomen.

Beyond the physical effects, the mental strain of constant rushing can erode happiness and emotional balance. When every moment feels like a race, we lose the ability to be present. Meals are rushed, conversations are distracted, and rest becomes guilt-ridden.

Over time, this state of constant urgency can lead to burnout, anxiety, and a sense of emptiness — even when life appears successful on the surface.





# of Always Being in a Rush



So how do we slow down in a world that rewards speed? It starts with intentional pauses.

- **Practice single tasking:**

Focus on one thing at a time, whether it's eating lunch, sending an email, or having a conversation.

- **Schedule breathing space:**

A few minutes of deep breathing, stretching, or simply doing nothing helps reset your nervous system.

- **Redefine productivity:**

Remember that rest, reflection, and recovery are essential parts of meaningful progress.

**Living at a slower pace doesn't mean doing less — it means doing things with more awareness and purpose.**

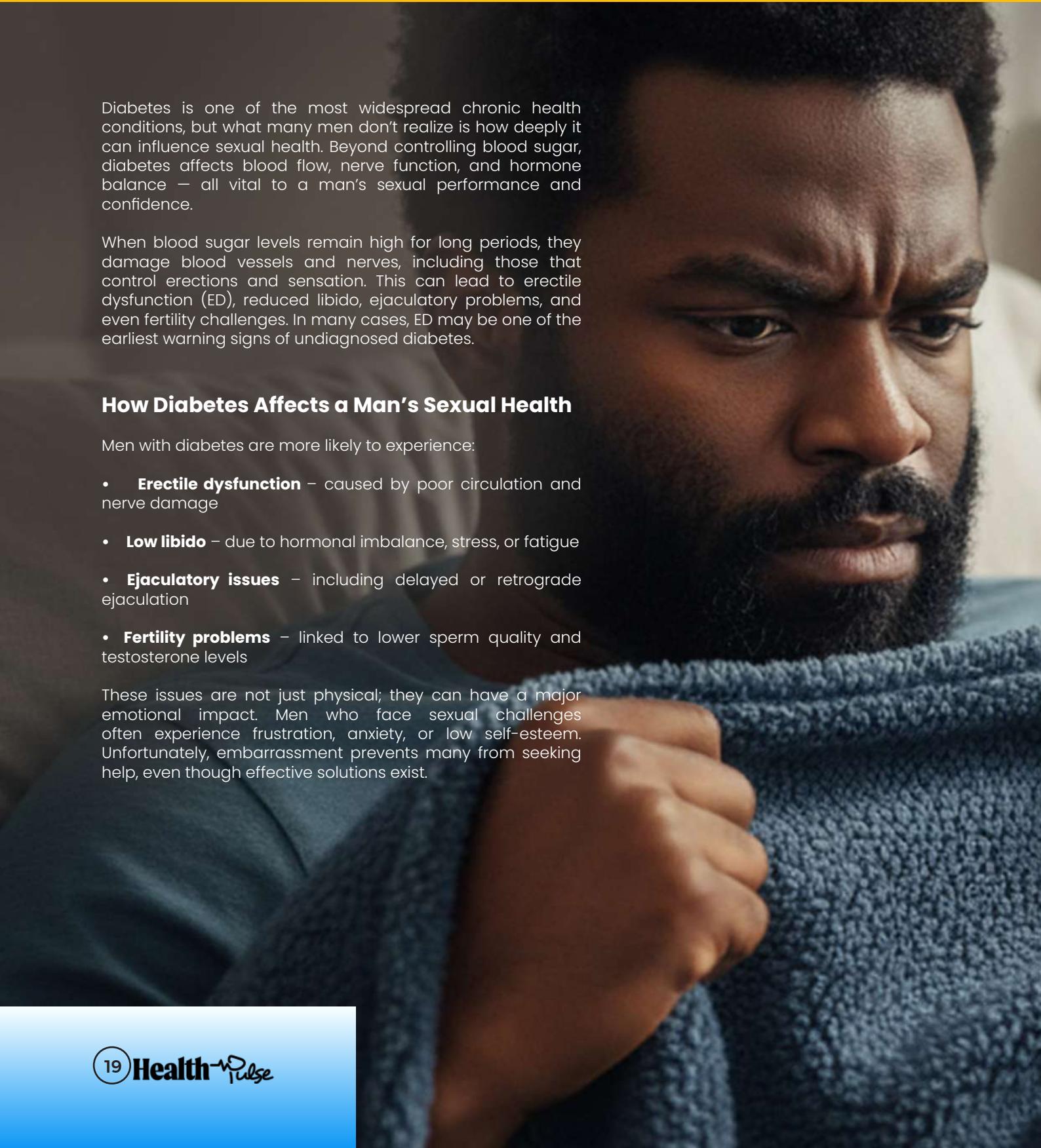
**When you slow down, you give your body time to heal, your mind space to think, and your heart permission to feel.**

**In the end, balance — not speed — is the true measure of a well-lived life.**



# Diabetes and

## Understanding how blood sugar affects performance



Diabetes is one of the most widespread chronic health conditions, but what many men don't realize is how deeply it can influence sexual health. Beyond controlling blood sugar, diabetes affects blood flow, nerve function, and hormone balance – all vital to a man's sexual performance and confidence.

When blood sugar levels remain high for long periods, they damage blood vessels and nerves, including those that control erections and sensation. This can lead to erectile dysfunction (ED), reduced libido, ejaculatory problems, and even fertility challenges. In many cases, ED may be one of the earliest warning signs of undiagnosed diabetes.

### How Diabetes Affects a Man's Sexual Health

Men with diabetes are more likely to experience:

- **Erectile dysfunction** – caused by poor circulation and nerve damage
- **Low libido** – due to hormonal imbalance, stress, or fatigue
- **Ejaculatory issues** – including delayed or retrograde ejaculation
- **Fertility problems** – linked to lower sperm quality and testosterone levels

These issues are not just physical; they can have a major emotional impact. Men who face sexual challenges often experience frustration, anxiety, or low self-esteem. Unfortunately, embarrassment prevents many from seeking help, even though effective solutions exist.

# Sexual Health

rmance, confidence, and overall well-being of men

## Managing Diabetes for Better Sexual Health

The key to protecting sexual health lies in good diabetes management and healthy lifestyle choices. Regularly monitoring blood sugar, eating a balanced diet, and staying physically active help maintain strong circulation and nerve function. Exercise boosts energy and hormone balance, while quitting smoking and limiting alcohol can improve vascular health. Managing stress through relaxation, mindfulness, or hobbies also supports both mental and sexual well-being.

Doctors can offer tailored treatments from medications and hormone therapy to counseling, depending on the underlying cause. Early medical attention not only improves sexual performance but also reduces risks of heart disease and other complications.

## The Takeaway

Sexual health reflects overall health. By keeping blood sugar under control, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and speaking openly with healthcare providers, men can reclaim vitality and confidence.

Healthy blood sugar means healthy circulation and healthy circulation supports sexual vitality, confidence, and connection.



# Type 1 vs Type 2 Diabetes

Breaking down the causes, symptoms, and management of both types

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic conditions worldwide, but not all types are the same. The two major forms Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes share similar symptoms but differ in their causes, development, and treatment approaches. Understanding these differences is key to proper diagnosis, management, and prevention.

## What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when the body cannot properly regulate blood sugar (glucose), its main source of energy. Glucose is controlled by insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas. When insulin is lacking or the body becomes resistant to it, glucose builds up in the bloodstream — leading to high blood sugar, or hyperglycemia.

## Type 1 Diabetes: The Autoimmune Form

### Cause:

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the insulin-producing cells (beta cells) in the pancreas. As a result, the body produces little to no insulin.

### Who It Affects:

It often develops in children, teenagers, or young adults, though it can appear at any age.

#### Symptoms:

- Frequent urination and extreme thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue or weakness
- Blurred vision
- Increased hunger

### Management:

Since the pancreas no longer produces insulin, people with Type 1 diabetes require daily insulin therapy for life. Regular blood sugar monitoring, a balanced diet, and physical activity are essential for maintaining control.





## Type 2 Diabetes: The Lifestyle-Linked Type

### Cause:

In Type 2 diabetes, the body still produces insulin but becomes resistant to its effects. Over time, the pancreas can't keep up, leading to elevated blood sugar levels.

### Who It Affects:

It typically develops in adults over 40, but rising obesity rates mean it's increasingly seen in younger people and even adolescents.

### Symptoms:

Type 2 symptoms are similar but may develop more gradually:

- Frequent thirst and urination
- Slow-healing wounds
- Fatigue
- Tingling or numbness in hands and feet
- Blurred vision

### Management:

Many cases can be managed through lifestyle changes — healthy eating, weight control, and regular exercise. If needed, doctors may prescribe oral medications or insulin therapy.

### The Takeaway

While Type 1 diabetes cannot yet be prevented, Type 2 diabetes can often be delayed or avoided through a healthy lifestyle — including regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and maintaining a healthy weight.

Early detection and consistent care can help prevent complications and improve quality of life for all people living with diabetes.

Understanding the difference is the first step toward better management and healthier living.



# Exercise and Blood Sugar: The Perfect Balance

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

Figuring out exercise when you have diabetes is a lot like learning a new dance. It has its own rhythm and steps. Sure, you know it's good for you, but you also worry about your blood sugar levels going all over the place.

The good news? Once you get the hang of it, movement becomes one of your strongest tools. This isn't about punishing workouts or running yourself ragged. It's about finding a groove that feels good, gives you energy, and—most importantly—is something you can actually stick with.

The best plan is the one that works for you and keeps you safe. So before you start, having a quick chat with your doctor is always the smartest first move. Once you get the thumbs-up, you can think about your routine as having a few key parts.

Activities like a brisk walk, a few laps in the pool, or just dancing around your living room are fantastic. This kind of activity helps your body use insulin more effectively. When your muscles are working, they start soaking up glucose for energy, which can help lower your blood sugar.

Don't underestimate the power of building muscle. Whether you're using light weights, resistance bands,

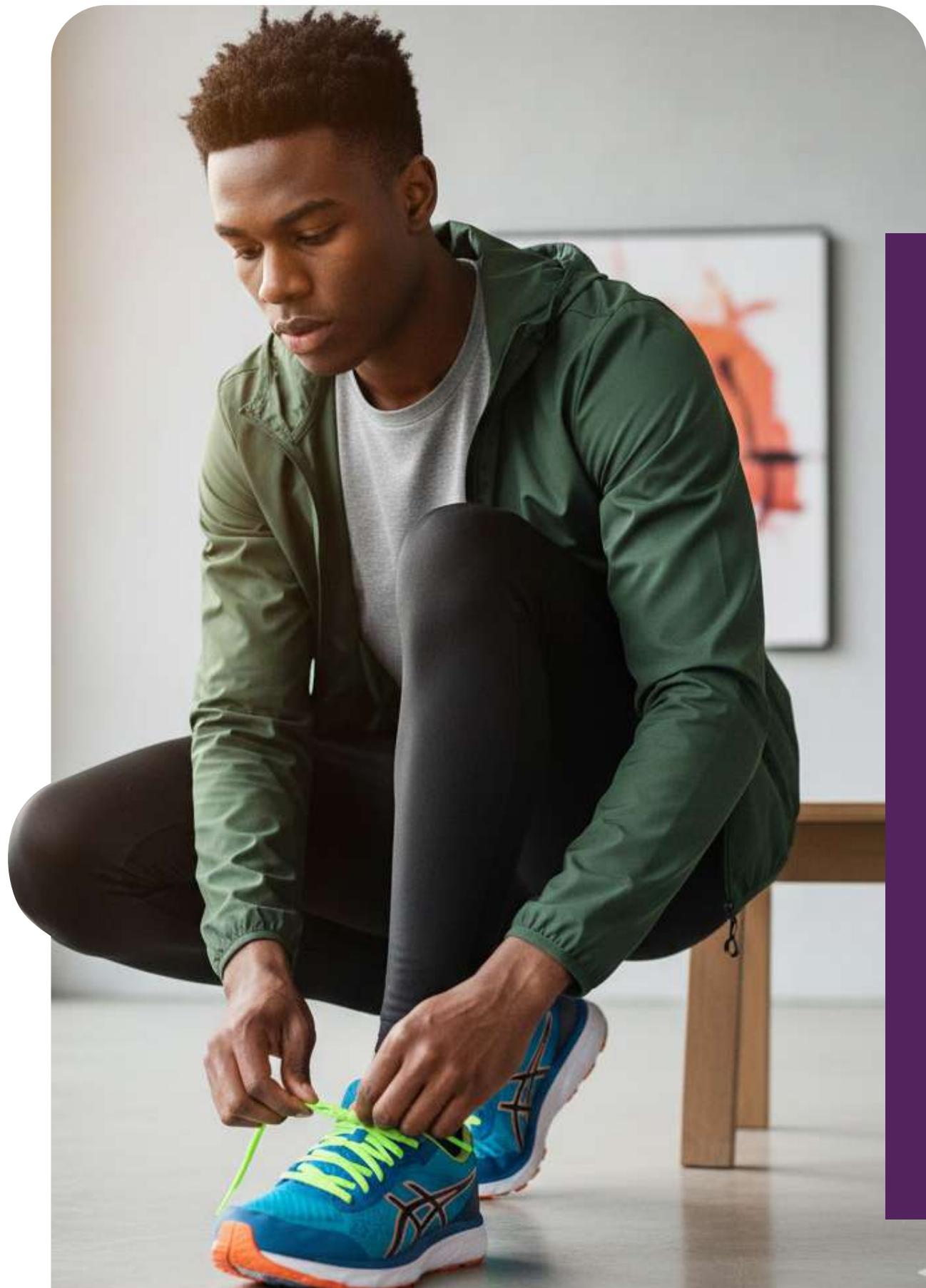
or just your own bodyweight, you're essentially building your body's own storage tanks for glucose. The more muscle you have, the better your body can manage blood sugar, even when you're just relaxing on the couch.

This is where practices like yoga come in. They're not just about touching your toes; they're about calming your nervous system. Since stress can really mess with your blood sugar levels, finding ways to unwind is powerful. Plus, staying flexible and balanced helps prevent injuries, so you can keep doing the activities you love.

Try to check your levels before, during, and after you exercise. It's the best way to see how your body personally reacts. If you're a little low before you start (say, below 100 mg/dL), a small snack can help you avoid a crash. And don't be alarmed if you see a temporary spike during a really intense session—your liver might just be lending some extra fuel. Seeing these patterns helps you understand what's normal for you.

The way your body and blood sugar respond to movement is a constant back-and-forth.

Learning that "language" is your superpower.



# Greek Yogurt and Berry Parfait Bowl

**Sweet, creamy, and packed with probiotics and healthy fats**

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

This simple, low-carb breakfast bowl is both delicious and nourishing — ideal for busy mornings or meal prep days. The Greek yogurt provides protein and probiotics for gut health, while the berries add antioxidants and natural sweetness. A sprinkle of nuts and seeds delivers satisfying crunch and heart-healthy fats to keep you energized throughout the morning.

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain, full-fat Greek yogurt
- ½ cup mixed low-carb berries (raspberries, blueberries, or blackberries)
- 2 tbsp chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds, or pecans)
- 1 tbsp chia or hemp seeds
- Unsweetened coconut flakes (optional topping)

## Instructions:

- In a bowl or jar, layer the Greek yogurt and mixed berries.
- Sprinkle with chopped nuts, chia or hemp seeds, and coconut flakes.
- Serve immediately for a cool, creamy breakfast — or cover and refrigerate overnight for a ready-to-go morning meal.

**Tip:** For added flavor, drizzle lightly with unsweetened almond butter or a few drops of vanilla extract.

## Nutrition Focus:

- High in protein for muscle and energy support
- Rich in probiotics for digestive health
- Packed with antioxidants and healthy fats

**A delicious balance of creamy, crunchy, and naturally sweet — all in one power-packed bowl.**



# Supporting a Loved One with Diabetes

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

Receiving a diabetes diagnosis can feel like stepping into a new world with an unfamiliar language of carbohydrates, blood glucose levels, and A1c. For the person diagnosed, it's a journey they must walk, but they don't have to walk it alone. The family home can transform from a place of potential dietary landmines into the most vital support system. True support isn't about policing or panic; it's about partnership. It's a gentle, consistent presence that helps manage any difficulty one faces.

Read nutrition labels together, spot hidden sugars, and enjoy high-fiber foods to make grocery shopping a team effort. Engage your loved one in meal preparation and planning by introducing them to new, tasty, and healthful foods, such as grilled fish with roasted vegetables or filling salads with lean protein. Instead of singling them out, consider normalizing their nutritional demands and

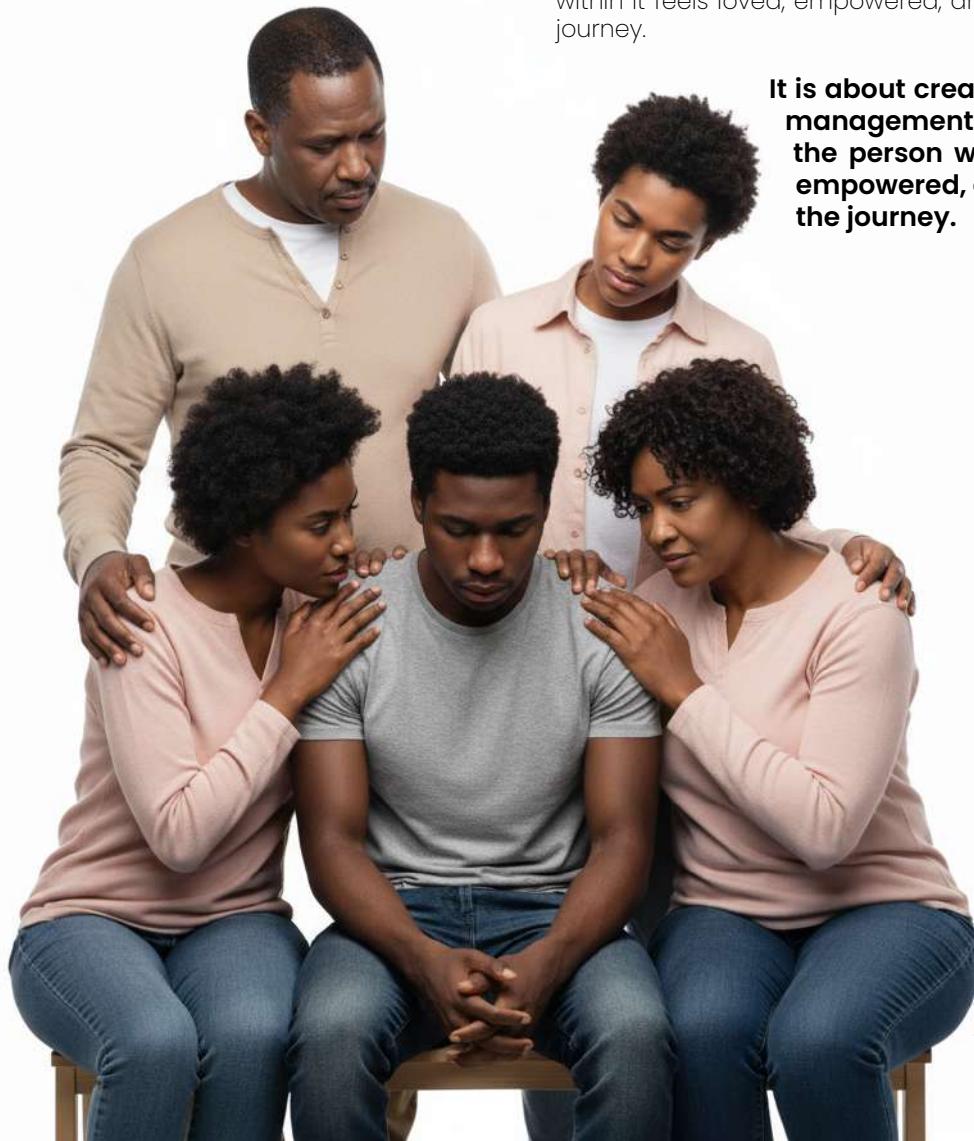
promote a team approach to wellbeing by having them eat the same balanced meals.

Help your loved one stay on track with their medication schedule by offering to set up a pill organizer or create a simple chart. Assist without nagging and use gentle reminders like "Did you remember to pack your insulin for the day?" Also, create a comfortable environment for blood sugar checks, ask with genuine curiosity.

Take the time to learn the signs of hypoglycemia (confusion, shakiness, sweating) and know where the fast-acting glucose or glucagon kit is kept.

Supporting a loved one with diabetes requires empathy and understanding. Offer a listening ear and let them vent without immediately offering solutions. Celebrate their small wins, like stable readings or healthy choices, to boost morale. And most importantly, see beyond the condition - engage in activities, share laughs, and remind them they're more than their diabetes. It is about creating a home where management is seamless, and the person within it feels loved, empowered, and never alone on the journey.

**It is about creating a home where management is seamless, and the person within it feels loved, empowered, and never alone on the journey.**



# Preventing Type 2 Diabetes: Small Habits, Big Results

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Type 2 diabetes is one of the fastest-growing health challenges worldwide, but the good news is that it's largely preventable. Simple, consistent lifestyle changes can significantly reduce the risk of developing the condition — and the earlier they're adopted, the greater the benefits.

## 1. Watch Your Diet

A healthy, balanced diet is your first line of defense. Focus on whole foods — fruits, vegetables, legumes, lean proteins, and whole grains. Limit sugary drinks, refined carbs, and processed snacks, which can cause blood sugar spikes. Replacing sweetened beverages with water and choosing fiber-rich foods can improve insulin sensitivity and help maintain a healthy weight.

## 2. Stay Active

Regular physical activity helps your body use insulin more effectively. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise — such as brisk walking, cycling, or dancing — five days a week. Even small movements, like taking the stairs or walking during breaks, can make a difference over time.

## 3. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being overweight is one of the strongest risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. Losing even 5–10% of body weight can lower your risk dramatically. The goal isn't perfection — it's progress and consistency.





## 4. Manage Stress and Sleep

Chronic stress and poor sleep can affect hormones that regulate blood sugar. Prioritize 7–8 hours of sleep nightly and find healthy ways to manage stress — meditation, journaling, or simply taking time to relax.

## 5. Get Regular Check-ups

Routine health screenings can detect early signs of prediabetes, giving you time to take action.

Small, sustainable habits can have a big impact. Preventing Type 2 diabetes isn't about drastic diets or rigid routines — it's about making mindful, daily choices that support long-term health and energy. Your future self will thank you.





# Beat the Swings:

## Why Consistent Meal Times Are a Diabetic's Best Friend

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Managing diabetes isn't only about what you eat — it's also about when you eat. While diet quality and medication play major roles in controlling blood sugar, maintaining regular meal times is one of the simplest yet most powerful strategies to prevent the highs and lows that can disrupt daily life.

### Why Timing Matters

Your body relies on a steady rhythm of fuel intake to keep blood sugar levels balanced. When you eat, glucose from food enters the bloodstream, providing energy for cells. For people with diabetes, whose insulin response may be impaired or reduced, irregular meal patterns can cause sharp spikes or sudden drops in blood sugar.

Skipping meals or eating too late can lead to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), resulting in fatigue, dizziness, and irritability. On the other hand, eating large, unplanned meals can trigger hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), increasing long-term risks for complications such as nerve damage, kidney disease, and heart problems.

### The Role of Routine

Eating meals at consistent times each day helps synchronize the body's insulin activity with food in-

take. This is particularly important for those taking insulin or oral medications that lower blood sugar.

#### A regular eating schedule:

- Prevents extreme fluctuations in glucose levels.
- Improves medication effectiveness, since insulin timing can match meal patterns.
- Enhances digestion and metabolism, promoting stable energy levels.
- Supports better portion control by reducing overeating due to hunger spikes.

- Avoid late-night eating, which can disrupt overnight glucose control.

### Real-Life Balance

You don't need to eat at the exact same minute every day, but try to keep meals within a consistent one-hour window. For example, if you usually eat lunch at 1:00 p.m., aim for somewhere between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m.

Small adjustments — like prepping meals ahead or keeping healthy snacks on hand — can make consistency easier to maintain even with a hectic schedule.

### Practical Tips for Consistent Meal Times

- Plan three main meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) around the same time daily.
- Include small snacks if your doctor or dietitian recommends them, especially between long gaps.
- Set reminders to avoid missing meals during busy days.
- Balance your plate with fiber-rich carbohydrates, lean proteins, and healthy fats to slow glucose absorption.



### The Bottom Line

For people living with diabetes, meal timing is as important as meal content. Regular eating habits support steady blood sugar levels, reduce fatigue, and protect against long-term complications.

**In diabetes care, structure is strength — and eating on time is one of the most effective ways to stay in control.**



# Health Terms On Diabetes

## Comprehensive Diabetes Glossary: Key Medical Terms Explained

### **Acanthosis nigricans (uh-kan-THO-sis NIH-grih-kans)**

A skin condition characterized by darkened skin patches; common in people whose body is not responding correctly to the insulin that they make in their pancreas (insulin resistance). This skin condition is also seen in people who have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes.

### **Albuminuria (al-BYOO-mih-NOO-ree-uh)**

A condition in which the urine has more than normal amounts of a protein called albumin. Albuminuria may be a sign of nephropathy (kidney disease).

### **Blood glucose meter**

A small, portable machine used by people with diabetes to check their blood glucose levels. After pricking the skin with a lancet, one places a drop of blood on a test strip in the machine. The blood glucose meter (sometimes called a monitor) measures and displays the blood glucose level.

### **Bolus (BOH-lus)**

An extra amount of insulin taken to cover an expected rise in blood glucose (blood sugar), often related to a meal or snack.

### **Cardiometabolic risk factors (CAR-dee-oh MET-ah-BALL-ick)**

A set of conditions that have a big effect on whether or not you develop diabetes and/or heart disease.

### **Charcot's foot (shar-KOHZ)**

A condition in which the joints and soft tissue in the foot are destroyed.

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