

Health Pulse magazine

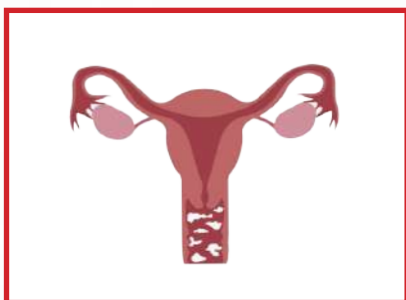


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HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

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.

HCOWAA 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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Why Making Medicines in Ghana is a Vital Investment in Health Security.

The event took place at the CLOSAG Head Office in Accra and brought together major stakeholders in the traditional medicine sector.

Distinguished personalities present included the Director for Traditional and Alternative Medicine at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Anastasia Yirenkyi, the Registrar and Board Chairman of the Traditional Medicine Practice Council, professors of traditional medicine, researchers, and practitioners from across the country.

Delivering a speech on behalf of Madam Sihong Jiang, President of HCOWA, the Vice President expressed the Association's strong admiration for the Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Traditional and Alternative Medicine for their remarkable leadership in developing Ghana's traditional medicine sector. According to her, Ghana's consistent efforts in registering practitioners, testing and approving herbal medicines, building centres of excellence, supporting research, and integrating safe traditional medicine into hospitals have set a standard that is admired across West Africa. She noted that whenever HCOWA travels abroad to speak about African traditional medicine, "the Ghanaian example is the one we proudly present."

Madam Jiang also stressed the urgent need for Ghana to establish a fully standardized system for processing traditional medicines, especially if the country aims to export herbal products across Africa and beyond.

She stated that Ghana's rich herbal knowledge can only be globally competitive when it is backed by uniform standards, proper documentation, and modern processing systems.

According to her, HCOWA, together with strategic partners from China, is ready to support Ghana in this direction. She announced that plans are already underway to establish a standardized herbal medicine processing line in partnership with Pentecost University, with the goal of developing high-quality, safe, and export-ready traditional medicines. She added that this initiative will help Ghana achieve long-term sustainability, international recognition, and improved market access.

Following this, the Director of Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Dr. Anastasia Yirenkyi, emphasized the urgent need for Ghana's traditional medicine sector to adopt and integrate international best practices, particularly the high standards used in China.

She explained that China's advanced systems for testing, verification, safety assurance, and production quality offer a valuable model that Ghana can learn from.

She noted that integrating these standards will not only enhance safety and trust but will also elevate Ghana's capacity to produce traditional medicines that meet global requirements.

Madam Jiang reaffirmed HCOWA's readiness to collaborate closely with the Ministry of Health and all stakeholders. She explained that

HCOWA is prepared to support joint training workshops, facilitate exchange visits, share research findings, and help organize regional conferences that will deepen cooperation and improve the quality of traditional medicine across the region.

She further praised the strong and productive partnership between Ghana and the People's Republic of China in the area of traditional medicine. She highlighted that training programmes, medical equipment support, exchange visits, and joint research projects between Chinese and Ghanaian experts have brought real benefits to ordinary citizens.

"Lives have been saved and suffering reduced because these two great traditions of healing decided to walk together," she said.

Madam Jiang added that HCOWA is ready to help extend the Ghana-China collaboration to the entire West African region, creating opportunities for practitioners, researchers, and students across ECOWAS to benefit from shared knowledge, technical expertise, and joint innovation.

She concluded by thanking traditional healers, herbalists, researchers, nurses, and doctors who continue to uphold African medicine. She also expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Ghana's Chinese partners for their dedication and commitment to strengthening the traditional medicine ecosystem.



The Pancreas and Its Role in Diabetes

Understanding how this vital organ regulates blood sugar and what happens when it fails

By Gloria Addo

The pancreas is a small but powerful organ that plays a central role in maintaining the body's energy balance. Located behind the stomach, it functions both as a digestive gland and an endocrine gland. While its digestive enzymes help break down food, its hormonal function — particularly the production of insulin — is crucial in controlling blood sugar levels. When the pancreas fails to produce or properly use insulin, diabetes mellitus develops.

How the Pancreas Regulates Blood Sugar

The pancreas contains tiny clusters of specialized cells called the islets of Langerhans, which release hormones directly into the bloodstream. The two main hormones involved in glucose regulation are:

- **Insulin:** Produced by beta cells, it lowers blood sugar by helping cells absorb glucose for energy.
- **Glucagon:** Produced by alpha cells, it raises blood sugar by prompting the liver to release stored glucose.

Together, these hormones maintain a delicate balance — ensuring that blood sugar levels stay within a healthy range throughout the day.

When Pancreatic Function Breaks Down

In Type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys the insulin-producing beta cells of the pancreas. As a result, the body produces little or no insulin, and individuals require lifelong insulin therapy to survive.

In Type 2 diabetes, the pancreas still produces insulin, but the body's cells become resistant to its effects. Over time, the pancreas becomes overworked trying to compensate, and insulin production gradually declines. This form of diabetes is closely linked to obesity, poor diet, and lack of physical activity.

Both types lead to elevated blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia), which, if not controlled, can damage the heart, kidneys, nerves, and eyes.

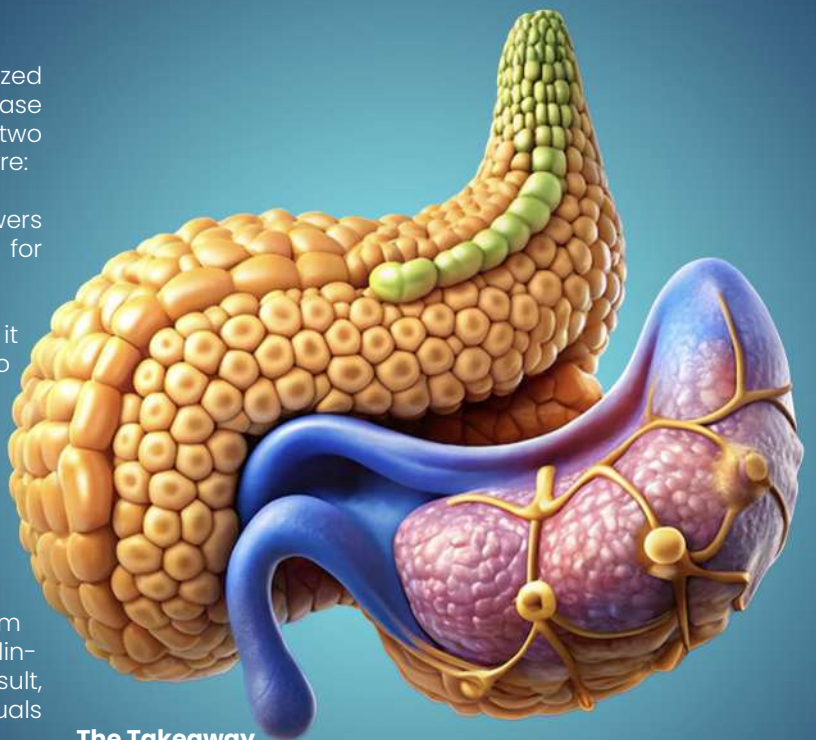
Protecting Pancreatic Health

A healthy pancreas supports stable blood sugar and long-term metabolic health. Key habits include:

- Eating a balanced diet rich in vegetables,

lean protein, and whole grains.

- Exercising regularly to improve insulin sensitivity.
- Avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol, which can damage pancreatic tissue.
- Managing weight and stress, both of which affect hormone regulation.



The Takeaway

The pancreas is the body's silent regulator of energy and blood sugar. When it functions well, glucose remains balanced and energy flows smoothly. But when insulin production falters or resistance develops, diabetes arises — proving that a healthy pancreas is at the heart of a healthy life.

HCOWA Deepens Training on Integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine in Women's Health in Ghana

The Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA), in partnership with Tat Kai Wai Hong Pharmaceutical Company, once again served as a hub for knowledge exchange and collaborative learning as it hosted the second edition of the training seminar on the integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in Women's Health and Gynecology at its headquarters this week. Building upon the foundation laid during the earlier training, this session placed particular focus on Ermiao Pills (Ermiao Wan) — a classical TCM formula derived from Zhu Danxi's Experiential Therapy, known for its effectiveness in clearing heat, drying dampness, and restoring internal balance, especially in the lower body.

Understanding TCM and the Role of Ermiao Pills

Led by Dr. Sandra Ashong, the seminar centered on the TCM concept of Damp-Heat syndromes — a common diagnosis associated with inflammatory gynecological conditions such as vaginitis, cervicitis, leucorrhea, and pelvic inflammatory disease. Participants were introduced to Ermiao Wan as a simple yet potent herbal formula containing just two key ingredients: Atractylodis Rhizoma and Phellodendron Cortex. Dr. Ashong highlighted how the formula exemplifies the TCM philosophy of achieving powerful therapeutic outcomes through minimal but harmoniously balanced components.

Scientific Insights and Clinical Applications

The presentation bridged traditional TCM wisdom with modern scientific perspectives, showcasing the pharmacological benefits of Ermiao Wan, including its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties.

Illustrative case studies demonstrated the formula's application in managing conditions such as menorrhagia, leucorrhea, pelvic inflammation, and premenstrual vomiting, as well as non-gynecological conditions like eczema and joint pain linked to damp-heat accumulation.

Dr. Ashong also underscored the role of lifestyle factors — such as stress, dietary habits, and



environmental humidity – in disrupting internal balance and contributing to disease development.

Interactive Learning and Collaborative Dialogue

Participants engaged in interactive discussions and collaborative reflections on integrating TCM principles into clinical practice. One area of focus was the combined use of Baofukang Gel and Ermiao Pills for managing urogenital infections and lower-jiao damp-heat syndromes.

The dialogue fostered exchange among TCM practitioners, pharmacists, medical officers, and other healthcare professionals, strengthening efforts to harmonize herbal therapies with modern diagnostic techniques for improved patient outcomes.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Prince Opoku Dogbey, Vice President of HCOWA, commended the facilitators and participants for their ongoing dedication to professional development.

“Each training session brings us closer to building a more integrated healthcare system – one that combines the time-tested wisdom of traditional medicine with the precision of modern science to improve women’s health across West Africa,” he stated.

The seminar concluded with an exhibition and networking session featuring TCM-based products, including Baofukang Gel and Ermiao Pills, alongside demonstrations of AI-assisted diagnostic machines. Participants left energized to apply the new knowledge across healthcare facilities and community outreach programs.



Diabetes and Women's Health:

How High Blood Sugar Can Trigger Yeast and Urinary Infections

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Living with diabetes means paying attention to more than just blood sugar readings. For many women, one of the lesser-known effects of diabetes is an increased risk of vaginal yeast infections and urinary tract infections (UTIs). These infections can be uncomfortable, recurring, and even signal that blood sugar levels are not under control. Understanding the connection can help you protect your intimate health and overall well-being.

Why Diabetes Raises the Risk

When blood sugar levels remain high, excess glucose builds up in the body's tissues and urine. This extra sugar becomes the perfect "food source" for yeast and bacteria to grow, especially in warm, moist areas like the vaginal region and urinary tract.

But that's not all—diabetes can also:

- Weaken the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight off infections.
- Disrupt vaginal balance, allowing yeast (*Candida albicans*) to multiply more easily.
- Affect circulation and nerves, reducing sensitivity and delaying early detection of irritation or discomfort.

What to Watch For

Signs of a Vaginal Yeast Infection:

- Itching or burning around the vagina and vulva
- Thick, white discharge (often described as "cottage cheese-like")
- Redness, swelling, or soreness
- Pain during urination or sex

Signs of a UTI:

- Frequent or urgent need to urinate

- Burning or pain while urinating
- Cloudy, dark, or foul-smelling urine
- Lower abdominal or back pain

If left untreated, a UTI can spread to the kidneys, causing fever, chills, and fatigue—so don't ignore these warning signs.

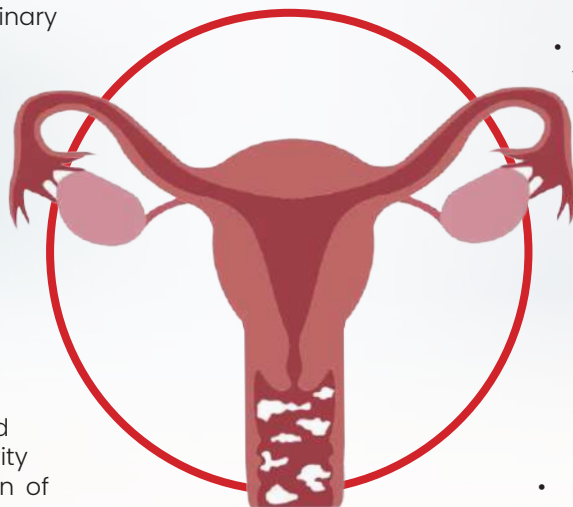
Prevention Starts with Blood Sugar Control

The most effective way to prevent these infections is to keep your blood sugar within your target range. Stable glucose levels reduce excess sugar in the urine and help maintain a healthy vaginal environment.

Other smart habits include:

- Staying well-hydrated to flush bacteria from the urinary tract
- Wearing breathable, cotton underwear and avoiding tight clothing
- Wiping front to back after using the toilet
- Urinating soon after sexual activity
- Avoiding scented soaps or feminine sprays that disrupt natural balance

- Visit a doctor when you experience recurring yeast infections or UTIs—more than twice in six months



Bottom Line

Diabetes care is not just about managing numbers—it's about protecting every part of your body, including your reproductive and urinary health. With proper blood sugar control, good hygiene, and regular checkups, you can stay infection-free and feel your best every day.



WHO Raises Alarm as Stakeholders Demand Stronger Alcohol Control Measures in Ghana

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

reports that alcohol consumption is responsible for three million deaths globally every year, with six deaths occurring every six minutes. Although alcohol has long been embedded in many cultures, the organisation warns that its use is tied to serious health risks, contributing to a wide range of diseases, injuries, and premature deaths.

WHO data shows alarming links: alcohol accounts for 100 per cent of alcohol use disorders, 18 per cent of suicides, 18 per cent of interpersonal violence, 27 per cent of traffic injuries, and 13 per cent of epilepsy cases. It also contributes to 48 per cent of liver cirrhosis, 26 per cent of mouth cancers, 26 per cent of pancreatitis, 20 per cent of tuberculosis, 11 per cent of colorectal cancer, five per cent of breast cancer, and seven per cent of hypertensive heart disease.

These concerns were highlighted at the 2nd High-Level Stakeholders Meeting on the implementation of Ghana's National Alcohol Policy (NAP) 2016, organised in Accra by the Alcohol Policy Alliance-Ghana (GhanAPA).

The meeting, themed "Harnessing the Reset Agenda to Stimulate Healthy Lifestyles, Reduce Health Risks, and Promote Wellness through the Passage of the Draft National Alcohol Control Regulations in Ghana," brought together representatives from the Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Health Service, National Health Insurance Authority, Mental Health Authority, National Road Safety Authority, Ghana Revenue Authority, and other key institutions.

GhanAPA raised concern over the growing burden of alcohol-related harm in Ghana. According to the Mental Health Authority's 2023 report, the country recorded 3,765 alcohol-related mental health disorders and 5,554 cases linked to other psychoactive substances. Additionally, the 2023 STEPS Report revealed that 22.6 per cent of adults aged 18–69 years were current drinkers, with consumption higher among men (30.6%) than women (14.5%). A 2014 National Road Safety Authority study also identified alcohol as a major factor in road crashes.

The Alliance reaffirmed its commitment to supporting national frameworks such as the National Health Policy 2020, the National Policy on Non-Communicable Diseases 2022, and the Excise Duty (Amendment) Act 1108. Participants urged stakeholders to prioritise full implementation of the National Alcohol Policy 2016 and called on the Ministry of Health and Parliament to pass the draft National Alcohol Control Regulation into law. They further recommended increased and sustainable financing to ensure effective policy implementation and protect public health from commercial interests.



Source: WHO

Smart Monitoring and Continuous Glucose Tracking

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

One of the most significant breakthroughs in modern diabetic care is the Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) — a small, wearable sensor that tracks blood sugar levels in real time, 24 hours a day.

Worn discreetly on the arm or abdomen, the CGM continuously measures glucose levels in the interstitial fluid beneath the skin and sends the data wirelessly to a smartphone or receiver.

This technology has revolutionized how individuals with diabetes understand and manage their condition. Instead of relying solely on traditional finger-prick tests, users can now see how their blood sugar levels fluctuate throughout the day and night — after meals, during exercise, or even while sleeping.

These insights allow for timely adjustments in insulin dosage, diet, or activity, helping prevent dangerous highs and lows before they occur.

What makes CGMs particularly valuable is their real-time alert system. When glucose levels begin to rise or fall beyond a healthy range, the device sends notifications to the user — and, in some cases, directly to caregivers or healthcare professionals.

This feature enhances safety and peace of mind, especially for children, the elderly, or individuals with type 1 diabetes who are at higher risk of sudden drops in blood sugar.



Alongside CGMs, smart glucometers are transforming home-based diabetes management. These modern devices connect to smartphones via Bluetooth, automatically recording blood sugar readings, generating visual trends, and even sharing data securely with healthcare teams.

Such integration minimizes manual record-keeping and reduces human error, ensuring that both patients and doctors can base decisions on accurate, up-to-date information.

Beyond convenience, smart monitoring devices empower individuals with greater self-awareness and control.

Seeing how food, exercise, and stress affect glucose levels in real time encourages healthier habits and more consistent management — turning daily monitoring from a burden into an empowering health tool.

Technology is making diabetes management not just smarter, but safer — helping people stay one step ahead of their condition.



Care, Compassion, and Recovery of the Youngest Patient in the DRC Ebola Outbreak

Ebola virus disease remains a deadly illness, claiming lives even amid advances in vaccines and treatments.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the latest outbreak in Bulape Health Zone, Kasai Province has resulted in 64 cases (53 confirmed, 11 probable) and 45 deaths, a 70% fatality rate. The remote location made it difficult to deliver care, yet compassion and dedication turned despair into hope.

A remarkable story emerged when an eleven-month-old baby boy, the youngest Ebola patient in the outbreak, survived after losing his mother to the disease.

"I am deeply grateful to everyone who cared for my baby, especially Jean and the medical team,"

said Alidor Mashala Katshiabala, the child's father.

"They gave me back my son. I can only say thank you from the bottom of my heart."

The baby was admitted to the Bulape Ebola Treatment Centre on 19 September with his stepmother and siblings. While his family members tested negative, he tested positive—likely infected through breastfeeding and close contact with his late mother. He received round-the-clock medical care and emotional support from Jean Mikobi Tshilomba, another patient who was also recovering from Ebola.

Tshilomba, recalling his experience, said, "What moved me most was thinking about my own child at home. If I were gone, I would hope someone would care for them the same way. I did it simply out of love."

Thanks to the dedication of health workers and volunteers, 19 patients have recovered, and no new cases have been reported since 25 September.

"Seeing this baby recover was one of the most touching moments of the outbreak," said Dr Mory Keita, WHO Incident Manager for Ebola response in Bulape.

"It reminds us why we do this work—to save lives and restore hope."

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners, efforts continue to strengthen surveillance, assist survivors, and bring the outbreak to a full close.



Source: WHO



Diabetes is caused by eating too much sugar

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

MYTH: “Diabetes is caused by eating too much sugar.”

FACT: Sugar does not directly cause diabetes.

Let's break it down:

- **Type 1 Diabetes** is an autoimmune disease — your immune system mistakenly attacks the insulin-producing cells in your pancreas. It has nothing to do with sugar intake or lifestyle.
- **Type 2 Diabetes** develops when the body becomes insulin resistant, meaning it can't use insulin effectively. This is influenced by genetics, inactivity, excess body weight, and unhealthy eating habits — but not by sugar alone.

While eating a lot of sugary foods can lead to weight gain, which is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes, it's not the root cause. In other words, sugar contributes indirectly, not directly.

Smart Takeaway:

Moderation is key. You don't need to cut out sugar completely — focus on a balanced diet, regular physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight.

Remember, diabetes is more complex than sugar alone. It's about how your body processes energy, not just what sweet treats you enjoy.

Healthy choices, daily movement, and regular screening can make all the difference — prevention starts with understanding the facts, not the myths.



The Hidden Weight of Diabetes

Understanding the psychological impact of living with a chronic condition

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Living with diabetes goes far beyond monitoring blood sugar and managing diet — it also means coping with the emotional and mental challenges that accompany a lifelong condition. The daily effort to balance meals, medications, and glucose levels can often lead to stress, frustration, and fatigue. This psychological strain is a vital yet often overlooked part of diabetes care.

Diabetes requires constant attention — from counting carbohydrates to checking blood sugar and planning every meal. Over time, this relentless routine can create what health experts call “diabetes distress.” This is not the same as depression but refers to the emotional burden of managing the disease every day.

Feelings of anxiety, guilt, or fear of complications are common, especially when blood sugar levels fluctuate despite best efforts. Many individuals also struggle with self-blame, believing they are personally at fault for their condition or its outcomes. Such emotions can reduce motivation and make diabetes management even harder.

Depression and Anxiety in Diabetes

Research shows that people with diabetes are more likely to experience depression or anxiety than those without the condition. The connection works both ways — mental health challenges can make

blood sugar harder to control, while poor diabetes management can worsen emotional distress. Symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and low mood can sometimes mimic or mask one another, making it important to seek professional help early.

Coping and Emotional Wellness

Managing the emotional side of diabetes begins with acknowledgment and support.

- Talk openly with healthcare providers about stress or burnout.
- Join support groups to share experiences with others who understand the journey.
- Practice self-care: Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and relaxation techniques help stabilize both mood and blood sugar.
- Set realistic goals: Small, achievable steps can restore confidence and motivation.

The Takeaway

Diabetes is not just a physical condition — it’s an emotional experience that affects every part of life. Recognizing and addressing the psychological side is as important as managing blood sugar. Emotional balance and medical control go hand in hand — caring for the mind is part of caring for diabetes.





Honey & Sugar Scrub: For Soft, Glowing Skin

This simple yet effective scrub combines the natural humectant power of honey with the gentle exfoliating properties of sugar, offering a luxurious, spa-like experience at home. It's ideal for all skin types and helps restore your skin's natural radiance without harsh chemicals.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 1 tablespoon of fine sugar (white or brown sugar works)

How to Make:

1. In a small bowl, mix the honey and sugar thoroughly until it forms a smooth, slightly thick paste.
2. If desired, add a few drops of natural oils, such as almond, coconut, or jojoba oil, for extra hydration.
3. Optionally, include a few drops of essential oils like lavender, rose, or tea tree for fragrance and additional skin benefits.

How to Use:

1. Start with clean, damp skin to allow better absorption of nutrients.
2. Scoop a small amount of the scrub and gently massage it onto your skin in circular motions. Focus on rough areas like elbows, knees, and heels.
3. Continue massaging for 1–2 minutes, but avoid over-scrubbing sensitive areas.
4. Rinse thoroughly with warm water.
5. Pat your skin dry with a soft towel and follow up with a light moisturizer to lock in hydration.

Benefits:

- **Honey:** Acts as a natural humectant, drawing moisture into the skin while soothing irritation. Its antibacterial and antioxidant properties help prevent breakouts and fight premature aging.
- **Sugar:** Gently exfoliates by removing dead skin cells, unclogging pores, and stimulating circulation, leaving skin smooth and radiant.
- **Natural Glow:** Regular use helps even out skin texture, brighten dull areas, and restore your skin's youthful softness.

Tips for Best Results:

- Use 1–2 times per week to avoid over-exfoliation.
 - Store any leftover scrub in an airtight container for up to a week.
 - Perform a patch test if you have sensitive skin or allergies to honey.
 - For an extra pampering experience, follow with a warm shower and a hydrating body mask.
- Pro Tip: Pair this scrub with a gentle facial toner or aloe vera gel for a soothing post-exfoliation ritual that enhances your skin's natural glow.



Kofikrom Pharmacy: Powering a New Era of Pharmaceutical Excellence in West Africa

By Gloria Addo

As part of Health Pulse Magazine's exclusive project spotlighting forward-thinking pharmaceutical institutions shaping healthcare transformation, the team together with representatives of Tat Ka Wai Hong Pharmaceuticals visited Kofikrom Pharmacy Limited.

This visit was more than a corporate tour; it was an immersion into the story of a Ghanaian pharmaceutical company rewriting the future of healthcare manufacturing across West Africa. At Kofikrom, innovation and leadership are not aspirations; they are the engine driving every decision, every partnership, and every product that makes it onto pharmacy shelves across Ghana and beyond.

A Ghanaian Vision Taking Root from Humble Beginnings to Gigantic Strides

In a sector where global imports have long dominated the availability of essential medicines, Kofikrom Pharmacy Ltd has quietly but boldly risen to become one of Ghana's most dynamic pharmaceutical manufacturers.

What began as a modest operation after the founder unceremoniously exited an institution he worked at for 20 years, has evolved into a highly structured manufacturing company grounded in precision, scientific rigour, and an unwavering commitment to local production. Its growth reflects a story of resilience, disciplined leadership, and a deep belief that Africa can and must build the capacity to produce its own lifesaving medicines. At the centre of this evolution is Dr Kofi Addo-Agyekum, a pharmacist whose professional journey is as compelling as the company he founded.

Prior to founding Kofikrom Pharmacy, Dr. Addo-Agyekum worked under the guidance of his late father, an experience he describes as "tough, transformative, and foundational". But in 2014, an unexpected termination of his appointment from the family business thrust him into uncharted territory. This unfortunate



turn of events culminated in Dr Addo-Agyekum founding Kofikrom Pharmacy.

Innovation Built Brick by Brick

From its early days, and with scanty resources, Kofikrom has grown into a fully FDA-certified manufacturing facility supported by skilled pharmacists, quality assurance specialists, production technicians, and other support staff.

Currently, its distribution network covers all 16 regions of Ghana, backed by a dedicated team of sales and marketing representatives and over 1,500 distributors. Beyond Ghana's borders, Kofikrom's products are steadily gaining ground in francophone West Africa, prompting the company to introduce bilingual packaging to support its expanding demand.

Kofikrom now boasts over 85 FDA-approved SKUs, covering key therapeutic areas including pediatric care, chronic disease management,



urology, infectious diseases, and analgesics. Its rapid-response disinfectant lines, developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, earned national acclaim—including recognition from the Office of the President—for its swift innovation and critical service to the nation.

Quality as a Promise—and a Discipline

At Kofikrom, quality is not merely an internal standard; it is a promise to the millions who depend on safe, effective, and affordable medicines.

Every product undergoes a meticulous journey: formulation, testing, packaging, regulatory submission, FDA registration, and post-market surveillance.

“Our products must speak for themselves,” Dr Addo-Agyekum notes. “Patients return because they trust what we produce.” That trust has become one of Kofikrom’s strongest currencies.

Expanding the Frontiers of Patient Care

In 2024, Kofikrom extended its footprint into retail with the launch of an ultra-modern pharmacy facility. Designed to elevate the standard of pharmacy practice, the facility places clinical pharmacists at the centre of patient counselling, medication therapy management, and wellness care.

It is a step towards a future where pharmaceutical manufacturing and pharmaceutical care exist in a seamless synergy—bringing expertise directly to the communities that need it most.

Fuelling Ghana’s Local Manufacturing Agenda With Ghana’s policy reserving 142 essential medicines for local manufacturers, Kofikrom sees an enormous opportunity to accelerate national medicine security. The company is actively pursuing strategic collaborations—particularly with Europe, India, and China’s advanced pharmaceutical ecosystems—to strengthen manufacturing efficiency, reduce production costs, and enhance medicine



availability, access, efficacy, and affordability across the region.

Among its standout innovations are:

- A branded generic prostate management formulation (Talgentis)
- The widely celebrated K-Balm Herbal Analgesic Ointment
- An expanding line of pediatric and chronic care solutions
- A wide range of sweet-scented locally produced disinfectants

These products reflect the company’s commitment to blending science, innovation, and indigenous knowledge to deliver world-class healthcare solutions.

Beacon for Africa’s Pharmaceutical Future

Kofikrom Pharmacy Limited is more than a manufacturing company, it is a case study in African leadership, entrepreneurial courage, and scientific ambition. Its story proves that when expertise meets purpose, and when innovation is backed by discipline, a local company can rise to shape regional healthcare outcomes.

As Ghana and West Africa push towards greater pharmaceutical independence, Kofikrom stands as a strong, shining example of what is possible:

A future where Africa handles its healthcare destiny through innovation and expanded pharmaceutical manufacturing infrastructure.



HCOWA Association Joins Stakeholders to Mark African Traditional Medicine Day

The Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) Association yesterday, 19th November 2025, joined the Ministry of Health, the Directorate of Traditional and Alternative Medicine, the Traditional Medicine Practice Council, and other regulatory agencies to commemorate the 23rd African Traditional Medicine Day and the 26th Traditional Medicine Week.

By Gloria Addo

The event took place at the CLOSAG Head Office in Accra and brought together major stakeholders in the traditional medicine sector. Distinguished personalities present included the Director for Traditional and Alternative Medicine at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Anastasia Yirenkyi, the Registrar and Board Chairman of the Traditional Medicine Practice Council, professors of traditional medicine, researchers, and practitioners from across the country.

Delivering a speech on behalf of Madam Sihong Jiang, President of HCOWA, the Vice President expressed the Association's strong admiration for the Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Traditional and Alternative Medicine for their remarkable leadership in developing Ghana's traditional medicine sector.

According to her, Ghana's consistent efforts in registering practitioners, testing and approving herbal medicines, building centres of excellence, supporting research, and integrating safe traditional medicine into hospitals have set a standard that is admired across West Africa.

She noted that whenever HCOWA travels abroad to speak about African traditional medicine, "the Ghanaian example is the one we proudly present."

Madam Jiang also stressed the urgent need for Ghana to establish a fully standardized system for processing traditional medicines, especially if the country aims to export herbal products across Africa and beyond.

She stated that Ghana's rich herbal knowledge can only be globally competitive when it is backed by uniform standards, proper documentation, and modern processing systems.

According to her, HCOWA, together with strategic partners from China, is ready to support Ghana in this direction. She announced that plans are already underway to establish a standardized herbal medicine processing line in partnership with Pentecost University, with the goal of developing high-quality, safe, and export-ready traditional medicines. She added that this initiative will help Ghana achieve long-term sustainability, international recognition, and improved market access.

Following this, the Director of Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Dr. Anastasia Yirenkyi, emphasized the urgent need for Ghana's traditional medicine sector to adopt and integrate international best practices, particularly the high standards used in China. She explained that China's advanced systems for testing, verification, safety assurance, and production quality offer a valuable model that Ghana can learn from.

She noted that integrating these standards will not only enhance safety and trust but will also elevate Ghana's capacity to produce traditional medicines that meet global requirements.

Madam Jiang reaffirmed HCOWA's readiness to collaborate closely with the Ministry of Health and all stakeholders. She explained that HCOWA is prepared to support joint training workshops, facilitate exchange visits, share research findings, and help organize regional conferences that will deepen cooperation and improve the quality of traditional medicine across the region.

She further praised the strong and productive partnership between Ghana and the People's Republic of China in the area of traditional medicine. She highlighted that training programmes, medical equipment support, exchange visits, and joint research projects

between Chinese and Ghanaian experts have brought real benefits to ordinary citizens.

"Lives have been saved and suffering reduced because these two great traditions of healing decided to walk together," she said.

Madam Jiang added that HCOWA is ready to help extend the Ghana-China collaboration to the entire West African region, creating opportunities for practitioners, researchers, and students across ECOWAS to benefit from shared knowledge, technical expertise, and

joint innovation.

She concluded by thanking traditional healers, herbalists, researchers, nurses, and doctors who continue to uphold African medicine. She also expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Ghana's Chinese partners for their dedication and commitment to strengthening the traditional medicine ecosystem.



Erectile Dysfunction and Diabetes: Understanding the Connection

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

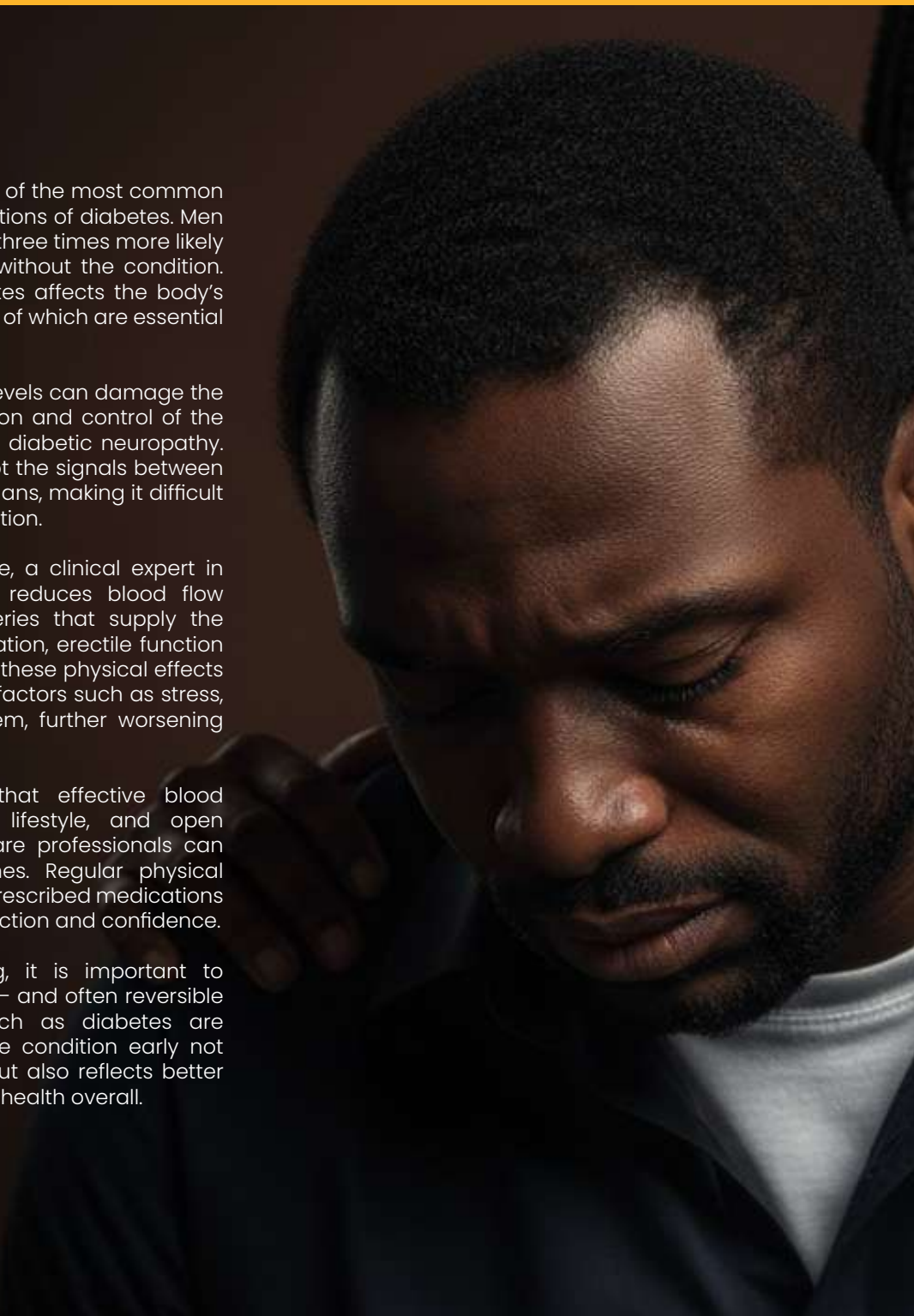
Erectile dysfunction (ED) is one of the most common yet often overlooked complications of diabetes. Men living with diabetes are two to three times more likely to experience ED than those without the condition. This is largely because diabetes affects the body's blood vessels and nerves, both of which are essential for normal sexual function.

Persistently high blood sugar levels can damage the nerves responsible for sensation and control of the penis — a condition known as diabetic neuropathy. This nerve damage can disrupt the signals between the brain and reproductive organs, making it difficult to achieve or maintain an erection.

According to Dr. Rajesh Dhake, a clinical expert in men's health, diabetes also reduces blood flow by damaging the small arteries that supply the penis. Without sufficient circulation, erectile function becomes impaired. Over time, these physical effects may combine with emotional factors such as stress, anxiety, or reduced self-esteem, further worsening the condition.

Further research indicates that effective blood glucose control, a healthy lifestyle, and open communication with healthcare professionals can significantly improve outcomes. Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and prescribed medications can all help restore normal function and confidence.

While ED can be distressing, it is important to remember that it is treatable — and often reversible when underlying causes such as diabetes are well-managed. Addressing the condition early not only improves quality of life but also reflects better cardiovascular and metabolic health overall.



Prevention Strategies

Preventing ED starts with proactive diabetes management. Regular blood sugar monitoring, maintaining a healthy weight, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol are essential. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, combined with at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, can help protect against vascular and nerve damage.

Men with diabetes should discuss sexual health openly with their healthcare providers during routine check-ups, as early intervention can prevent progression. Avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol further reduces the risk of developing ED.

Conclusion

The link between diabetes and erectile dysfunction underscores the importance of holistic health management. By controlling blood sugar and adopting healthy habits, many men can regain sexual function and enhance their overall well-being.

If you are experiencing ED, consult a healthcare professional. Effective treatments are available, and the condition is both common and manageable. Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness, and taking that step can lead to a healthier, more fulfilling life.



Diabetic Retinopathy in Ghana: A Silent Threat to Vision

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a leading cause of preventable blindness among working-age adults in Ghana and across Africa. It develops when high blood sugar damages the tiny blood vessels in the retina—the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. With over 317,000 adults living with diabetes in Ghana, roughly 1 in 3 will develop some form of DR within 10–15 years. For children and youth with Type 1 diabetes, early screening is essential, as damage can occur silently.

Causes and Risk Factors:

Persistent high blood sugar damages retinal vessels, causing leakage, blockage, and abnormal new vessel growth. Risk factors include poor glucose control, long duration of diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol, smoking, and pregnancy in

diabetic women. In Ghana, late diabetes diagnosis and inconsistent monitoring often lead to advanced DR at the first eye exam.

Stages of DR:

- Mild/Moderate NPDR: Early vessel changes; often no symptoms
 - Severe NPDR: Widespread ischemia; higher risk of progression
 - Proliferative DR (PDR): Fragile new vessels grow; can cause bleeding and vision loss
 - Diabetic Macular Edema (DME): Swelling in the macula; main cause of central vision loss
- Symptoms: DR is usually asymptomatic in early stages. Later signs include blurred vision, floaters, distorted vision, or sudden vision loss. By the time symptoms appear, damage may be irreversible.

Symptoms:

DR is usually asymptomatic in early stages. Later signs include blurred vision, floaters, distorted vision, or sudden vision loss. By the time symptoms appear, damage may be irreversible.

Treatment:

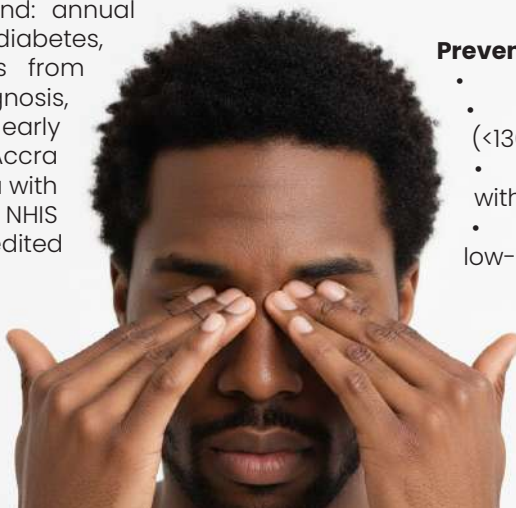
Options include laser photocoagulation to seal leaking vessels, anti-VEGF injections for macular edema, and vitrectomy for advanced cases. Strict control of blood sugar and blood pressure is essential to slow progression. NGOs sometimes subsidize costly treatments for low-income patients.

Screening and Diagnosis:

Ghanaian guidelines recommend: annual eye exams for adults with Type 2 diabetes, children with Type 1 diabetes from age 10- or 5-years post-diagnosis, and diabetic women during early pregnancy. Key facilities in Accra include major hospitals in Ghana with costs ranging from GHS 50–500. NHIS covers basic exams in accredited centers.

Prevention:

- Maintain HbA1c <7%
- Control blood pressure (<130/80 mmHg)
- Annual eye exams, even without symptoms
- Healthy lifestyle: exercise, low-GI diet, no smoking



Key Message:

“Your eyes don’t hurt until it’s too late.” Regular screening and good diabetes management are critical. If you notice sudden floaters, a curtain over vision, or rapid loss of sight, seek immediate care. Early detection and treatment can prevent blindness and preserve quality of life for people living with diabetes in Ghana.

The Sleep-Diabetes Link:

Why Rest is Essential

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

For people living with diabetes, managing blood sugar is a daily commitment—but one of the most powerful tools for glucose control is often overlooked: quality rest. Sleep is as vital as diet, medication, and physical activity. Without adequate sleep, the body struggles to regulate hormones, maintain insulin sensitivity, and manage stress. Prioritizing rest is not just about feeling refreshed—it is a core part of effective diabetes care.

How Sleep Affects Blood Sugar

Sleep directly influences how the body processes glucose. When you don't get enough rest, several changes occur:

- Insulin becomes less effective, causing higher blood sugar levels
- Cortisol (the stress hormone) rises, boosting glucose production
- Appetite hormones shift, increasing cravings for high-carb foods
- The body becomes more inflamed, reducing metabolic efficiency

Research shows that even a few nights of poor sleep can lead to higher morning glucose readings. Over time, this can affect A1C levels and increase the risk of complications.

The Goal: 7–9 Hours of Restful Sleep

Most adults with diabetes benefit from 7–9 hours of sleep per night. Deep, uninterrupted rest allows the body to repair tissues, balance hormones, and stabilize metabolism.

Quality sleep improves:

- Better glucose control
- Increased energy
- Improved concentration
- Stronger immune function

Build Progress, Not Perfection

Improving sleep doesn't require a perfect routine. Start with one small change—turning off screens earlier, adjusting your bedtime, or creating a calming night ritual. Over time, these steps build into a powerful habit that supports lasting health.

For people with diabetes, rest is medicine. When you sleep better, you live better—and managing your condition becomes easier, steadier, and far more sustainable.

- More balanced mood

In short: the better you sleep, the easier it becomes to manage your diabetes.

Stress Management:

The Daytime Rest Your Body Needs

For diabetic patients, managing stress is just as important as managing food. Moments of rest throughout the day can help:

- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce glucose fluctuations
- Improve mood and focus
- Support insulin sensitivity

Useful practices include:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Light stretching
- Short walks
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Quiet reflection

Even 5 minutes of calm can interrupt the stress-glucose cycle.



The Hidden Cost of Alcohol Consumption

By Gloria Addo

Alcohol consumption remains deeply rooted in many cultures, yet new evidence continues to show the significant health risks associated with its use. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that alcohol causes three million deaths annually worldwide—equivalent to six deaths every six minutes. Far from being a harmless social habit, alcohol contributes to a wide range of diseases, injuries, and premature deaths.

According to the WHO, alcohol is responsible for 100% of alcohol-use disorders, 18% of suicides, 18% of interpersonal violence, and 27% of traffic injuries. Its long-term effects are equally alarming, contributing to 48% of liver cirrhosis, 26% of mouth cancers, 26% of pancreatitis, 20% of tuberculosis, and several other chronic illnesses including colorectal cancer, breast cancer, epilepsy and hypertensive heart disease.

These concerns came to the forefront during the 2nd High-Level Stakeholders Meeting on the implementation of Ghana's National Alcohol Policy (NAP 2016), organised by the Alcohol Policy Alliance – Ghana (GhanAPA) in Accra. The meeting, themed "Harnessing the Reset Agenda to stimulate healthy

lifestyle, reduce health risks and promote wellness through the passage of the draft National Alcohol Control Regulations in Ghana," brought together key institutions such as the FDA, Ghana Health Service, NHIA, Mental Health Authority, National Road Safety Authority, and others.

Local data shows the urgency of the issue. The Mental Health Authority's 2023 report recorded 3,765 alcohol-related mental health cases and over 5,500 cases associated with other psychoactive substances. The STEPS 2023 Report further revealed that 22.6% of Ghanaians aged 18–69 are current drinkers, with men making up 30.6% and women 14.5%. The National Road Safety Authority has also confirmed alcohol as a major contributor to road crashes.

Stakeholders at the meeting called for the full implementation of the National Alcohol Policy (2016) and urged government to prioritize the passage of the draft National Alcohol Control Regulation. They also emphasized the need for adequate funding and protection of public health policies from commercial interests.

The good news is that alcohol-related harm can be reduced. Small, everyday decisions—choosing moderate consumption when needed, and staying informed—can make a difference in keeping Ghana healthier.



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Whole-Grain Toast with Avocado and a Sprinkle of Seeds

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

A simple, nutritious, and diabetes-friendly breakfast option, whole-grain avocado toast delivers the right balance of healthy fats, fiber, and protein to keep blood sugar steady throughout the morning. It's quick to prepare, customizable, and packed with nutrients that support heart health—a key concern for people living with diabetes.

Ingredients:

- 1–2 slices whole-grain or multigrain bread
- 1 ripe avocado
- A small squeeze of lemon or lime juice
- Pinch of salt and black pepper
- Seeds of your choice: chia seeds, flaxseeds, sesame seeds, or pumpkin seeds
- Optional: sliced tomato, boiled egg, or a few spinach leaves

Instructions:

1. Toast the bread until crisp and golden.
2. Prepare the avocado: Scoop the avocado into a bowl, add lemon juice, and mash lightly with a fork.
3. Build your toast: Spread the mashed avocado evenly over the toast.
4. Add toppings: Sprinkle your preferred seeds for added crunch and nutritional boost.
5. Season: Add a pinch of salt and pepper, and top with optional veggies or protein if desired.

Why It's Diabetes-Friendly

- High fiber from whole-grain bread slows carbohydrate absorption.
- Healthy fats from avocado stabilize blood sugar and support heart health.
- Seeds provide extra fiber, protein, and essential minerals.
- Customizable carbs: You can use one or two slices depending on your glucose goals.

Quick Nutritional Benefits

- Avocado: Rich in monounsaturated fats, which help improve insulin sensitivity.
- Whole grains: Provide steady, sustained energy without sharp glucose spikes.
- Seeds: Add omega-3s, fiber, and micronutrients that support metabolic health.





Stronger Together:

Blending Family Support and Technology for Better Diabetes Control

By Richeal Elikem Dovia

Managing diabetes requires constant attention to blood sugar levels, medications, diet, and physical activity and for many patients, the support of family members can make a significant difference in achieving better outcomes. In recent years, technology has emerged as a powerful tool that enables families to play a more active role in diabetes care, making daily management easier, more accurate, and more collaborative.

Sharing Glucose Readings Through Apps

Modern glucose monitoring devices often come with apps that allow patients to log and share their blood sugar readings in real-time. Family members can monitor trends, provide encouragement, and alert healthcare providers if readings fall outside safe ranges. This connected approach ensures that patients never feel alone in managing their condition, while families remain informed and engaged.

Setting Reminders for Medications

Adherence to prescribed medications is crucial for diabetes management. Smartphones and wearable devices allow patients or family members to set reminders for insulin doses, oral medications, or routine glucose checks. Families can support patients by confirming doses are taken on time, reducing the risk of missed medications and helping maintain consistent blood sugar control.

Monitoring Physical Activity with Wearable Devices

Regular exercise is a cornerstone of diabetes management. Wearable devices such as smartwatches or fitness trackers can monitor steps, heart rate, and active minutes, providing feedback to both patients and their families. This shared data encourages accountability and makes it easier for families to join in, turning physical activity into a collaborative, motivating effort.

The Benefits of Tech-Enabled Family Support

Technology bridges the gap between patients and families, empowering relatives to take an active role without being intrusive. Patients feel supported, families feel involved, and healthcare providers gain valuable insights that improve clinical decision-making. Research shows that connected care through technology can lead to better glycemic control, fewer complications, and improved quality of life for people living with diabetes.

Conclusion

Families are invaluable partners in diabetes care, and technology is expanding the ways they can help. By sharing glucose readings, setting medication reminders, and tracking physical activity together, families and patients create a connected support system that strengthens adherence, encourages healthy habits, and improves long-term outcomes.



Sichuan-Chongqing Ghana Chamber of Commerce Officially Inaugurated

By Richeal Elikem Dovia





Sichuan-Chongqing Ghana Chamber of Commerce Officially Inaugurated

The Sichuan-Chongqing Ghana Chamber of Commerce was officially inaugurated on Wednesday, 19th November 2025, in a grand ceremony held at the Tang Palace Hotel. The event attracted high-profile diplomats, business leaders, and representatives from major Chinese, Ghanaian, and West African institutions. The evening unfolded in a vibrant atmosphere marked by cultural exchange, economic dialogue, and strengthened bilateral cooperation.

The ceremony commenced with a welcome address from Mr. Tang Hong, Honorary Development Advisor, who expressed gratitude to guests and underscored the Chamber's mission to deepen commercial ties between Ghana and the Sichuan-Chongqing region of China. He described the Chamber as a timely platform designed to advance investment, trade, and collaboration.

Delivering the keynote address, His Excellency Tong Defa, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Ghana, highlighted the strong and evolving partnership between both nations. He stated, "Our cooperation is built on mutual respect, shared development goals, and a firm commitment to advancing the well-being of our people. China remains dedicated to supporting Ghana's industrial growth, infrastructure expansion, and digital transformation." He encouraged companies from Sichuan and Chongqing to explore Ghana's expanding economic opportunities.

A major highlight of the evening was the address by Hon. Nana Oye Bampoe Addo, Deputy Chief of Staff (Administration), serving as Guest of Honour. She described the inauguration as a significant milestone in the longstanding Ghana-China relationship. Citing President John Dramani Mahama's recent state visit to China, she emphasized renewed commitments to green energy, infrastructure development, industrialization, and technological innovation.

A key moment of the evening was the address by the President of the Chamber, Madam Sihong Jiang, reiterating the organization's dedication to serving its members and strengthening bilateral cooperation. She remarked, "Guided by the Chamber's mission, we will strengthen services to build a true 'home for members.' We will integrate resources to create meaningful platforms for cooperation, uphold our social responsibilities to establish a positive and trustworthy image, and promote our shared culture to nurture a warm harbor for our community."

The evening was further enlivened by cultural and musical performances featuring Vice President Liu Xianbo, the Panda Street Dance troupe, HCOWA staff, Essence Clinic, and Daijaweikang Lin Qi—highlighting a fusion of Chinese and Ghanaian artistic expression.

The program also included a 30-winner grand lucky draw hosted by Mr. Li Jun, Executive Vice President, followed by presentations of citations honoring distinguished Advisors and the Chamber's President.

Additional prize draws heightened the excitement, culminating in a final giveaway of 100 health gift blind boxes, a human-sized panda teddy bear, and a complimentary flight ticket. The ceremony concluded with a group photograph coupled with dancing, marking the end of an evening many described as both historic and memorable.

The establishment of the Sichuan-Chongqing Ghana Chamber of Commerce is set to serve as a strategic platform for trade cooperation, investment promotion, technology transfer, and cultural integration further strengthening the growing Ghana-China partnership.

四川渝商会
SICHUAN-CHONGQING GHANA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Health Terms On Diabetes

Comprehensive Diabetes Glossary: Key Medical Terms Explained

Blood Glucose (Blood Sugar):

The amount of sugar in the blood, the main marker of diabetes.

Insulin:

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).

Pancreas

The organ that produces insulin.

Hyperglycemia:

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

Hypoglycemia:

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

HbA1c (Glycated Hemoglobin):

A blood test that measures average blood sugar over the past 2–3 months.

Fasting Blood Glucose:

: Blood sugar level after fasting for at least 8 hours.

Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT):

A test to diagnose diabetes or prediabetes.

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