



Cardiovascular health and diabetes among African Americans

Purpose of the study

Diabetes or high blood sugar is a common chronic disease that causes heart disease, kidney disease, loss of vision, and loss of legs and feet. Diabetes can be controlled by losing weight, exercising, and taking medications.

Researchers in the Jackson Heart Study (JHS) wanted to see if diabetes may be prevented or delayed in some African Americans who have 1 or more of 7 positive health factors (normal blood pressure, normal blood sugar, normal cholesterol) and lifestyle behaviors (normal body weight, eating a healthy diet, regular exercise, not smoking cigarettes).

Major findings

In the JHS, one in four men and women developed diabetes between the first and third exam visits. No participant met criteria for all 7 positive health factors and behaviors and few participants had more than 5 or 6 of these in the first exam. The more positive health factors or behaviors a participant had, the lower their chances of getting diabetes by the third exam visit. For example, a participant who had 3 positive health factors and/or behaviors had a lower chance of getting diabetes than a participant who had only 1 positive health factor and/or behavior.

Take away message

The more steps you take the better your chances are in preventing or delaying getting diabetes.



You can take one or more of the following 7 steps to prevent or delay getting diabetes:

Eat healthy. Eat more fruits, vegetables, lean meats or seafood, and nuts without salt. Eat less fats, added sugars, and salt.

Get active. Get more exercise, like brisk walking - 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Stop Smoking. Tobacco quitline 1-800-QUITNOW

Lose weight or keep a healthy weight. Lose around 5% to 7% of your bodyweight, 10 to 14 pounds for a 200 pound person. (www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html)

Control cholesterol.

Lower blood sugar.

Manage blood pressure.

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