



CASONY
Caribbean American
Society of New York



**NOVEMBER
2025**

HEALTH & WELLNESS GLOBAL IMPACT



AWARENESS & ACTION

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

by Dr. D. L. Beckles

November Diabetes is more than a disease; it's intertwined with culture, food, and community beliefs. Within the Caribbean diaspora in New York, many families share this reality, often due to generational **habits**, limited screening access, and misconceptions. In Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, we've observed a troubling rise in Type 2 diabetes, driven by diet, inactivity, stress, and

socio-economic factors. Many only discover their condition when serious complications arise, such as vision loss or kidney disease.

However, there is hope. **Early detection** and culturally sensitive care are making a difference. Our outreach teams have seen success through health fairs and community screenings, proving that small changes can lead to significant outcomes.

We aim to empower everyone—whether living with diabetes or supporting someone—to take proactive health steps. If each reader takes **one** preventive step, we can make a significant impact together.

BY THE NUMBERS

**38.4 Million
Americans
have
diabetes**

**11.6% of
the USA
Population**

**400Billion
in cost**

**97.6 Million
have
prediabetes**



World Health
Organization



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Bridging Health Equity Between the Caribbean and New York

A Global and Caribbean Perspective

Diabetes is more than a medical condition — it is a social, cultural, and economic challenge that affects how families live, eat, and plan for the future. Across the Caribbean–New York population, diabetes has quietly become one of the most pressing public health issues of our time. The disease disproportionately impacts people of African and Caribbean descent due to a combination of genetic predisposition, high-calorie diets,

limited access to preventive care, and deeply rooted lifestyle habits passed through generations. Traditional Caribbean cuisine is rich, flavorful, and community-centered — but also often high in starches, saturated fats, and refined sugars. Classic staples like white rice, fried plantain, sweetened beverages, and flour-based pastries contribute to elevated blood sugar levels when consumed regularly without portion control. The challenge is not to

to abandon heritage foods but to rethink preparation and portion size. Small adjustments, such as baking instead of frying, swapping white rice for quinoa or brown rice, and drinking coconut water instead of sugary sodas, can have measurable impacts on blood glucose stability.

With early detection and consistent management, individuals can live long, healthy lives.

The solution lies in **awareness, access, and action.**

10 MYTHS ABOUT DIABETES - BUSTED!



Changing Perceptions in the Caribbean–New York Community

MYTH

FACT

01

Only overweight people get diabetes.

Genetics, diet, and inactivity all contribute — not just weight

02

If I don't eat sugar, I can't get diabetes.

Excess calories and carbs — not just sugar — raise your risk.

03

Diabetes isn't serious.

It's one of the leading causes of blindness, kidney disease, and amputations.

04

Taking insulin means I failed.

Insulin is a treatment tool, not a punishment.

05

Herbal or natural remedies can cure diabetes.

No herbs or teas cure diabetes — only evidence-based treatment helps.

06

You can't eat fruit if you have diabetes.

Fruits with low glycemic index, eaten in moderation, support good nutrition.

07

Children can't get Type 2 diabetes.

Childhood Type 2 cases are increasing due to poor diet and inactivity.

08

If I feel fine, I don't need testing.

Half of people with diabetes don't know they have it — screening saves lives.

09

It's too late to prevent diabetes.

Healthy habits at any age reduce your risk or delay complications.

10

Diabetes only affects older people.

Diabetes affects people of all ages, including youth and young adults.

“BELIEVING MYTHS DELAYS TESTING — AND DELAYS TREATMENT.”



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Global Regions ▾



Select language ▾



Donate

Home / Initiatives / The WHO Global Diabetes Compact / The Global Diabetes Compact Forum



PREDIABETES COULD IT BE YOU?



98
Million

98 million American
adults—more than 1 in 3
—have prediabetes



More than 8 in 10
adults with prediabetes
don't know they have it



**NYC
HEALTH+
HOSPITALS**

ABCS for Prevention

- A** A1C
- B** Blood Pressure
- C** Cholesterol
- S** Screening



Take the TEST

WWW.CASONY.org

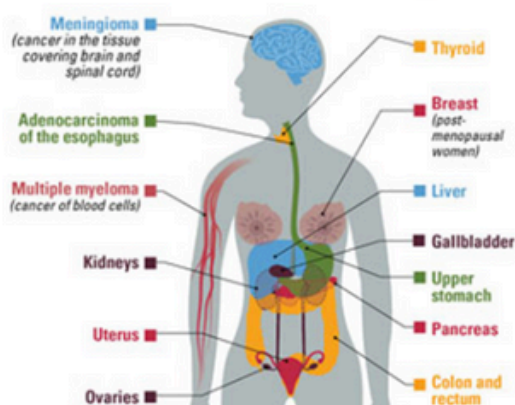
www.TPAUSA.org



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13 cancers are associated with overweight and obesity



Vitalsigns™
<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/obesity-cancer>



www.cdc.gov

AICR's Foods that Fight Cancer™ and Foods to Steer Clear Of, Explained

AICR's Foods that Fight Cancer™

No single food can protect you against cancer by itself.

But research shows that a diet filled with a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and other plant foods helps lower risk for many cancers. In laboratory studies, many individual minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals demonstrate anti-cancer effects. By including more foods that fight cancer into your diet, you will help reduce your risk of developing cancer.



Foods to Limit to Reduce Cancer Risk

A lot of us grow up eating foods that might be okay to eat, but aren't necessarily the best thing to eat. As you build your meal plans, make sure you're not overdoing it with foods that are best to have in small portions. Excessive consumption of alcohol, processed meats, red meats and sugar-sweetened drinks can all increase your risk of cancer. Read further to learn more about each of these foods, and the impact they can have on your risk of cancer.



www.myplate.gov



www.aicr.org



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**Turning Awareness into Action for the Caribbean–New York Community
Your Health, Your Future — Take Control Starting Today**

Managing and preventing diabetes starts with consistent small actions. For Caribbean–New York families, it's about honoring tradition while adopting healthier habits that protect your heart, body, and future generations.

1. Nutrition:

Eat Smart with a Caribbean Twist.

Swap fried foods for grilled or baked options.

Choose brown rice, quinoa, or ground provisions over white rice or flour dumplings. Limit sugary drinks — replace with infused water, coconut water (unsweetened), or herbal teas.

Fill half your plate with colorful vegetables.

2. Physical Activity: Move with Purpose

Aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise.

Dance, walk, or join community fitness groups — movement can be joyful and cultural.

Take short breaks every hour if you work long shifts.

3. Regular Health Checks

Schedule an A1C test at least twice per year.

Get your eyes, kidneys, and feet examined annually.

Record your blood sugar readings and bring them to your doctor visits.

4. Stress & Sleep

Chronic stress raises blood sugar levels — manage it with prayer, meditation, or mindfulness.

Aim for 7–8 hours of sleep per night.

Don't carry the world alone — reach out to support networks and faith communities.

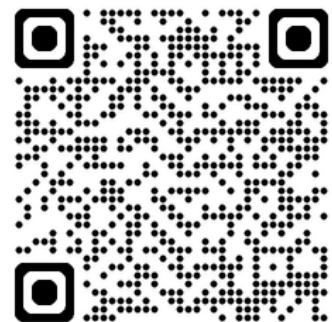
5. Medication & Monitoring

Take medications exactly as prescribed.

Don't skip doses to “stretch” medication supply — talk to your doctor about assistance programs.

Keep a personal log of medications, glucose levels, and meals.

**American
Diabetes Assoc.**



<https://diabetes.org/>



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HEMOGLOBIN A1c Target Levels

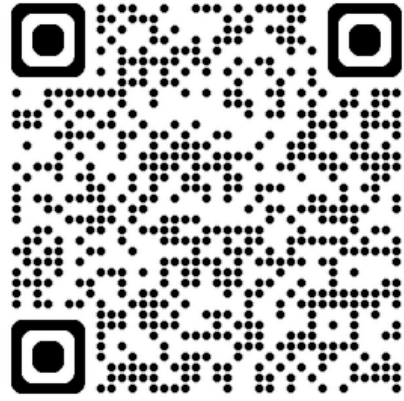


NORMAL
less than or equal to 5.6

PREDIABETES
5.7-6.4

DIABETES
6.5+

- ☐ Have I had my A1C measured this year?
- ☐ What screenings should I schedule for diabetes complications?
- ☐ What should I do if my blood sugar runs high or low?
- ☐ Are there new treatments or nutrition plans that could help me?
- ☐ How can I safely lose weight while keeping my sugar levels balanced?



diabetes.org

www.CASONY.org

www.TPAUSA.org



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ACTION STEPS



MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

Consume a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and healthy fats. Limit intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates.



EXERCISE REGULARLY

For at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week (such as brisk walking, swimming, or cycling).



MONITOR YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

Frequently check blood sugar levels as recommended by your health provider.



MANAGE STRESS

Practice stress-reducing activities such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga, and get adequate sleep.



TAKE MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED

Follow prescribed medication regimen as prescribed. Take medications at the proper times, and discuss any effects.



ATTEND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Regular check-ups with a healthcare team to monitor diabetes management plan.

PREVENTION



**EAT
HEALTHY**



**BE
ACTIVE**



**MAINTAIN A
HEALTHY
WEIGHT**



**GET
SCREENED**



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**MOVE
YOUR WAY**

Adults need a mix of physical activity to stay healthy.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity*
Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.

at least
150 minutes
a week

AND

Muscle-strengthening activity
Do activities that make your muscles work harder than usual.

at least
2 days
a week

* If you prefer vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (like running), aim for at least 75 minutes a week.

If that's more than you can do right now, **do what you can.** Even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. **What's your move?**

MyPlate.gov

MOVE MORE & EAT MORE (Healthy)



UPCOMING EVENTS

**December Holiday
Stress, Wellness and
Legacy Awareness
Month**



🥗 5 servings fruits/veggies daily **Nutrition** 🏃 30 mins/day **Fitness** 🧘 10 mins mindfulness **Mindfulness** 💧 8 glasses/day **Hydration** 😴 7 hrs/night **Sleep**

www.CASONY.org

www.TPAUSA.org



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MEN'S HEALTH CHECK QUICK CHECKIST

Based on U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and Community Health

	DONE	DUE
<input type="checkbox"/> A1C (DIABETES LABS) If abnormal, every 3-12 monthths		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> BLOOD PRESSURE Once a year		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> CHOLESTEROL/LIPIDS Every 4-6 years		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> PROSTATE SCREENING Starting at 50*		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> COLON CANCER SCREENING Starting at 45**		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> LUNG CANCER SCREENING If smoker: through age 80		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> CALCIUM SCORE (HEART RISK) If family hx of heart dx or high cholesterol		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> DENTAL EXAMS + CLEANING Every 6 months		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> VACCINES Ask doctor		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> COGNITIVE + MOOD Consider at 65		<input type="checkbox"/>

