

Diabetes

Public Health Brief



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What is Diabetes

Diabetes is a health condition that affects how the body turns food into energy. Most foods are broken down into glucose that gets released into our bloodstream and absorbed into our cells. The pancreas, a major organ in the body, plays a key part in diabetes because it releases insulin when blood sugar increases. When cells in the body are unable to properly absorb glucose, due to inadequate insulin production or a resistance of cells to the action of insulin, or both, then high blood glucose levels occur.¹

Types of Diabetes

Type 1 Diabetes

- Caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake) that stops your body from making insulin.
- Usually diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults.
- People with this diagnosis will require insulin every day to survive.

Type 2 Diabetes

- The body does not use insulin effectively and is unable to keep blood sugar at normal levels.
- Can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, eating healthy food, and being active.

Gestational Diabetes

- Develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes.
- Usually goes away after the baby is born, but increases the risk for type 2 diabetes later in life.
- The baby could be at higher risk for health problems later on in life.

Prediabetes

- Blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes.
- Raises the risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Sources:
 1. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>
 2. Maryland BRFS <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/brfs.aspx>
 3. Maryland Diabetes Action Plan: phpa.health.maryland.gov/CCDPC/Pages/diabetes-action-plan.aspx

DIABETES AND RELATED HEALTH DATA, 2015-2017²

Age-adjusted Adult Prevalence of Diagnosed Diabetes

Maryland	10%
Harford County	9%

Age-adjusted Prevalence of Insulin Use

Maryland	39.0%
Harford County	11.9%

Age-adjusted Prevalence of 150 Min. per Week of Physical Activity

Maryland	50.4%
Harford County	51.5%

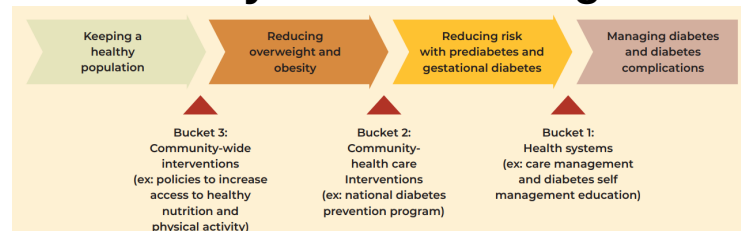
Age-adjusted Adult Obesity Prevalence

Maryland	30%
Harford County	30%

Maryland Diabetes Action Plan

In June 2020, the Maryland Department of Health released the 2019-2024 Diabetes Action Plan. The Plan, put in place to prevent and manage diabetes, provides information on the disease burden in Maryland and best practices for the State and its partners to implement. The plan is a collaborative effort with healthcare partners and community-based organizations to align efforts, resources, and funding. The strategies presented are multifaceted and keep in mind the social determinants of health.

Diabetes Systems Thinking Model



The Maryland Diabetes Action Plan uses a systems thinking model approach to frame the actions and strategies needed to address all components and populations along the continuum (healthy; overweight/obese; prediabetes/gestational diabetes; and diabetes and diabetes complications). This approach recognizes upstream factors, such as social-structural influences which affect the full population, to those at highest risk downstream, which includes diabetes and diabetes complications. Using this approach can also address high burden populations.³