

# *News from the Wyoming Department of Health*

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## **Wyoming Residents Should Know about Diabetes and Prevention** November is National Diabetes Month

Wyoming's state health officer is encouraging state residents who have diabetes or who at risk of the disease to recognize how important lifestyle changes such as healthy eating and active living can be for good health.

According to the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH), diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans with an estimated 79 million additional people at risk for developing the disease. In 2012, 9.1 percent of Wyoming adults reported having been told they have diabetes, which translates to roughly 40,000 people.

“For people living with diabetes or who are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes, small, but important steps can have a huge impact on both short- and long-term health, said Dr. Wendy Braund, state health officer and Public Health Division senior administrator with WDH. “Losing just 5-7 percent of your weight can significantly lower your risk of developing diabetes and can help those with the disease avoid serious complications. For a person who weighs 200 pounds, that’s just 10-14 pounds.”

Braund said uncontrolled diabetes can result in medical difficulties such as blindness (retinopathy), kidney disease and nerve damage (neuropathy). Diabetes is also an important risk factor for heart disease and stroke, as well as a leading cause of amputations due to the damage the disease sometimes causes in the feet and legs.

“A family history of diabetes does lead to a greater risk for developing Type 2 diabetes,” Braund said. “A primary risk factor for diabetes is being overweight or obese. Other risk factors include age, race, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.”

Braund said simple steps can help prevent diabetes and its complications:

- Be aware of personal risk factors
- Be physically active – aim for at least 30 minutes per day
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Eat more complex carbohydrates such as whole grain bread and pasta; and less refined grains like white/enriched bread and pasta
- Work with your doctor on preventive measures
- Manage blood pressure and cholesterol
- Quit or don't start using tobacco ([quitwyo.org](http://quitwyo.org) or 1-800-QUIT-NOW)

Symptoms of diabetes are often subtle but include:

- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty

- Feeling hungry, even though you are eating
- Extreme fatigue (tiredness)
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss, even though you are eating more (type 1)
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in hands/feet (type 2)

Braund said residents who experience any of these symptoms should talk with a medical professional to learn more.

Visit [www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/dhds](http://www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/dhds) to learn more about the Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and Control Program, find available resources, or locate local diabetes management programs.

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