

## Health Brief: Diabetes in Tennessee

HEALTH BRIEF

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## DIABETES

Nearly 13% of adults in Tennessee have diabetes. Only 9% in the U.S. do.

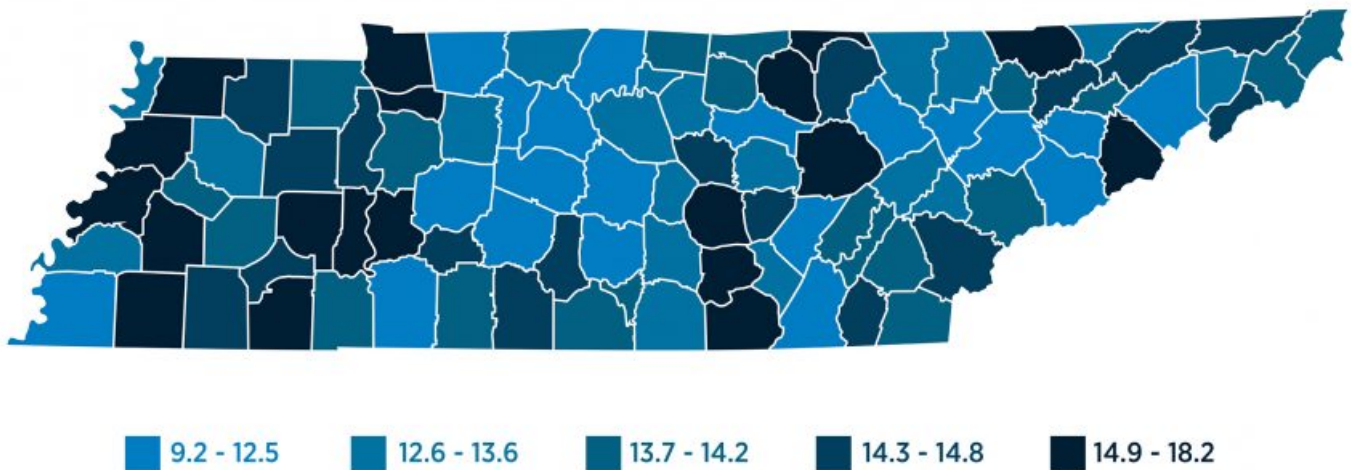
**36,000** Tennesseans are diagnosed with diabetes each year.

**161,000** Tennesseans are estimated to have diabetes but don't know it.

**9 out of 10** people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese.

**86 million** Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition which puts them at risk to develop full-blown type 2 diabetes.

Diagnosed Diabetes Percentages, Tennessee Counties, 2012-2014



## What is diabetes?

Insulin is a hormone that helps the body absorb blood sugar (glucose) to be used as energy.

People with diabetes are either unable to produce or unable to use insulin, causing glucose to stay in the blood rather than fuel the body's cells.

Eventually, glucose levels that are too high (hyperglycemia) can damage the vessels that supply blood to vital organs.

Someone dies of diabetes every

**3 minutes**

in the U.S.

That, in turn, can increase a person's risk of:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Vision problems
- Nerve problems

**Diabetes is the leading cause of:**

- **Blindness**
  - **Kidney failure**
  - **Amputations**
  - **Heart failure**
  - **Stroke**
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## What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

### Type 1 diabetes

About 5% of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes, in which the body does not produce insulin.

Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, and is treated using daily insulin shots or an insulin pump, and managing blood glucose levels through diet.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease and is not preventable.

**90%**

**of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese**

### Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, making up 95% of all diagnoses.

People with type 2 diabetes have what is called insulin resistance.

Their bodies do produce insulin, but:

- It's not processed properly or
- There isn't enough produced to keep blood sugar levels normal.

By keeping a healthy weight, the chances of preventing type 2 diabetes are increased. Once it does develop it must be managed through diet and exercise. In some cases, insulin injections are needed.

## Pre-diabetes

People with pre-diabetes have higher than normal blood sugar levels and are at risk to develop type 2 diabetes if they don't address it.

Pre-diabetic patients may be able to stop the full onset of diabetes by losing weight and exercising regularly.

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## What are the risk factors for diabetes?

90% of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese.

Other risk factors include:

- Age of 45+
  - Family history of diabetes
  - Gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 lbs.
  - High blood pressure
  - No physical activity
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## How common is diabetes?

In the U.S.

Diabetes is the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.

- More than 29 million Americans — 1 out of every 11 people — have diabetes.
- More than 8 million of those people are undiagnosed, which means one in four people with diabetes does not know they have it.
- 86 million Americans have pre-diabetes.
- More than 5,000 U.S. youths (under age 20) are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes each year.

### The diabetes belt

The Southeastern U.S. is home to what the CDC calls the “diabetes belt,” which is made up of:

- 644 counties
- In 15 states (including Tennessee)
- Where at least 11% of residents have been diagnosed with diabetes.



## In Tennessee

Tennessee has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate of diabetes in the U.S.

- 650,000 adults in Tennessee (13% of the population) have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- 161,000 adults in Tennessee have diabetes but do not know it. 1.7 million adults in Tennessee have pre-diabetes (36%).

## Increase

The rate of diabetes for Tennesseans age 45-64 has jumped from about 14% in 2011 to almost 18% in 2014.

While the number of people with diabetes in the U.S. is rising, Tennessee's rate is increasing faster.

# ADULT DIABETES

Current adult diabetes rate (2015)

**12.7%**

Rank among states (2015)

**5** /51

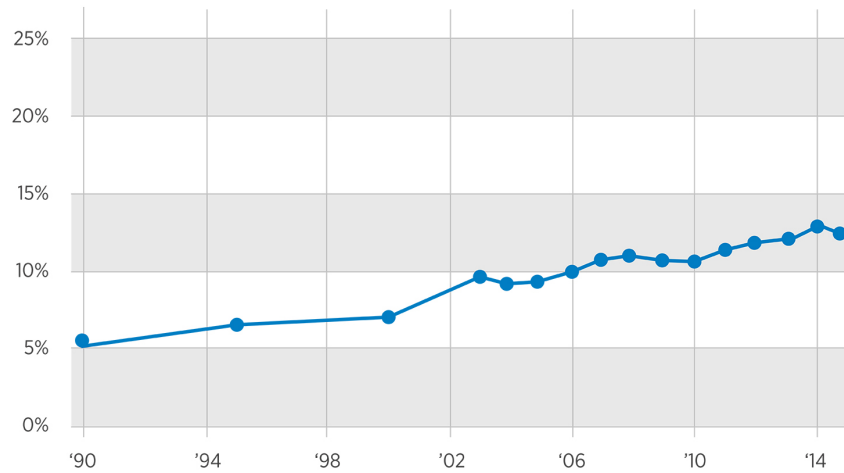
Diabetes cases in 2010

**594,871**

Projected cases of diabetes  
in 2030 at current pace

**939,564**

Historical adult diabetes rates (1990-2015)



## How much does diabetes cost?

In the U.S.

In 2012, the medical costs and lost wages for diabetics totaled \$245 billion.

Medical costs for people with diabetes are **TWICE** the cost of those who do not have the condition.

In Tennessee

Diabetes costs Tennessee an estimated \$6.6 billion a year.

Medical expenses in the state for both diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes, pre-diabetes and gestational diabetes cost \$4.9 billion.

Tennessee has \$1.7 billion of lost productivity annually due to diabetes.

## How can type 2 diabetes be prevented?

The CDC's [Diabetes Prevention Program](#) has been shown to cut the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in half.

Pre-diabetics learn how to transition to healthier eating habits and increased physical activity.

Lifestyle changes from the CDC program reduced type 2 diabetes risk by 58% for pre-diabetics.

As of 2016

- There were **22 locations** in Tennessee offering the program.
- They had **2,021 participants** enrolled with **237** completing the full year of **16 sessions**.
- Those who completed the program lost an average **6.5%** of their starting weight.

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## How is BlueCross addressing diabetes?

The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation provided a \$325,000 grant to the Faith Family Medical Center in Nashville to support its **Journey to Health** program.

BlueCross educates members about how to make smart choices and empowers them to get the right maintenance and preventive care. That work includes promoting regular screenings and personalized support from care managers.

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To learn more about fitness and obesity awareness in Tennessee visit: [bettertennessee.com/tag/fitness-obesity-awareness](https://bettertennessee.com/tag/fitness-obesity-awareness)