



Scroll down to download infographic 12 November 2015 – In observance of World Diabetes Day, WHO is calling on: individuals and families to improve their diet and physical activity to prevent diabetes and ensure it is being effectively managed by people living with the disease; governments to effect policies that promote healthy eating and active living; and civil society groups to empower communities to adopt healthy behaviours to reduce the number of premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases.

Diabetes is one of the four main noncommunicable diseases and together with cancer, heart attacks and strokes, and lung disease is responsible for 1.7 million deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean Region every year. Diabetes is a pandemic that remains hidden throughout most of the world, with up to half of all people with diabetes globally remaining undiagnosed. WHO projects that diabetes will be the 7th leading cause of death by 2030.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 14% of the population has diabetes. People with diabetes generally have one of two forms:

Type 1, where people do not produce their own insulin and require insulin injections for survival.

Type 2, where people do not produce enough insulin or are unable to use the insulin their body

produces, and require lifestyle adjustments and oral medication. This is the more prevalent form (comprises some 90% of all cases), and people with type 2 diabetes are characteristically overweight and sedentary.

Ineffective management of both types of diabetes can lead to heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure, blindness, impotence, amputations and infections. The potential impact of simple diet modifications and increased physical activity on preventing and improving diabetes is huge. Individuals and families, governments and civil society groups can all take action to change current unhealthy behaviours, in order to reduce diabetes.

Individuals and families can adopt healthy eating habits and become physically active.

Governments can effect policies that engage all sectors and populations in healthy eating and living and foster active, healthy environments in schools, workplaces, communities and cities. They can also legislate for banning marketing of unhealthy foods, and provide the care needed to detect and manage symptoms of people living with the disease.

Civil society groups can educate and advocate for healthy eating and living to prevent the onset of diabetes, and for early detection of the disease for people to manage their symptoms early on and prevent complications.



[View infographic on actions needed to prevent and manage diabetes](#)

Related resources

[A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit: Diabetes in the Gulf: The policy challenge](#)

[Physical activity and diabetes](#)

[Physical inactivity](#)

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[World Diabetes Day 2015: Halt the diabetes epidemic](#)

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