

# healthmatters

Spring 2015

## Diabetes: Are You At Risk?

HASHTAG, APP, SUPERSTORM—as society changes, new words emerge for once unknown concepts. A pair of epidemics occurring together has caused doctors to coin the new term diabetes. And they expect to have many more chances to use it.

Researchers predict that the number of people who will develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime will grow dramatically. Increasing weight is largely to blame. And waistlines only continue to expand.

### HOW OBESITY BECOMES DIABESITY

Diabetes occurs when your body either doesn't produce or can't use the hormone insulin properly to control blood glucose. When you're heavy, your body can't respond as well to the signals insulin sends. Your liver cells continue producing glucose and your muscle and fat cells stop absorbing it, leaving excess in your bloodstream.

Over time, high blood glucose can damage your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, and many other organs. Your risk for heart attacks, strokes, depression, and other serious problems also rises.

### CHANGE YOUR DEFINITION OF NORMAL

There's room for words such as *hope* and *prevent* in the description of diabetes, too. If you're overweight or obese, losing 5 to 7% of your body weight can slow or stop the onset of type 2 diabetes. Get started by adopting new healthy habits, such as:

- **Exercising.** Just 30 minutes a day, five days per week can make a big difference.
- **Changing your diet.** Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Make it easier by buying precut or frozen fruit at the store.
- **Getting enough sleep.** Sleep problems increase your diabetes risk. Talk with your doctor if you snore loudly or feel extremely tired during the day.

Set small, achievable goals. And seek help from friends, family, and medical professionals. Together, you can ward off diabetes and take control of any health issues you do have.



#### WANT MORE HEALTHY WEIGHT TIPS?


For more ways to keep the pounds off, visit the Bermuda Heart Foundation at [www.mybermudaheart.bm/weight.htm](http://www.mybermudaheart.bm/weight.htm).

**1**  
Reach and maintain a healthy weight.

**2 OUT OF 3**  
adults in Bermuda are overweight or obese.


**2** Eat a healthy diet.

**150 minutes**  
You should exercise each week (30 mins per day, 5x per week).



**3**  
Exercise regularly.

**68%**  
Percent of people in Bermuda who have fast food one or more times a week




**7** YOUR BY-THE-NUMBERS GUIDE TO PREVENTING HEART DISEASE.

## 7 STEPS TO BETTER HEART HEALTH


*Here are steps that experts recommend you take to help prevent heart disease. Your doctor can tell you what each one means for you.*

**4** Control blood pressure.



**120 mm / 80 Hg**  
A healthy blood pressure reading

**100 mg/dl**  
Highest level your fasting blood sugar should reach




**5** Manage blood sugar.

**6** Quit smoking.

**YOU ARE 2 TO 4 TIMES**  
more likely to have a heart attack or stroke if you smoke.

**7** Reduce cholesterol.

**200 mg/dl**  
Keep your cholesterol at this level or lower.



## The Blood Pressure—Memory Link

They say age brings wisdom. But making smart, healthy choices in midlife could help preserve your brainpower for years to come. Adults with lower blood pressure between ages 48 and 67 tend to have higher thinking and learning scores 20 years down the line. There's a lot you can do to bring those numbers down at any age.

### BLOOD PRESSURE AND YOUR BRAIN

The excess force of high blood pressure can burst or block blood vessels leading to your brain, starving your neurons of oxygen. In some cases, this causes a stroke or sudden, traumatic brain attack. In others, it reduces your cognitive abilities slowly over time.

### YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROTECTION PLAN

To lower high blood pressure, try these steps:

- Talk with your doctor about your risk factors, such as being overweight.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. And limit your sodium or salt intake to a teaspoon per day.
- Exercise for 150 minutes each week.
- Lose weight, if you're heavy.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage stress with yoga, meditation, or by listening to calm music.

**GET A FREE BLOOD PRESSURE GUIDE!**  
Visit the Bermuda Heart Foundation at [www.mybermudaheart.bm/BloodPressure.htm](http://www.mybermudaheart.bm/BloodPressure.htm) and click on "What is Blood Pressure?" to print out your copy.

# What You Need to Know About Nutrition Labels

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 slice (47g) Servings Per Container 6	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 160	Calories from Fat 90
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 10g	15%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	11%
Trans Fat 2g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 300mg	12%
<b>Total Carb</b> 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	3%
Sugars 1g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 45%	Iron 6%

**CALORIES:** Take note of how many calories you consume. To keep from gaining weight, you'll need to use at least as many calories as you take in every day.

**CARBOHYDRATES:** Total carbohydrates, dietary fibers, and sugars are also listed. Cut back on foods with added sugars, but increase high-fiber foods.

**SERVING SIZE:** Start with the serving size and number of servings per container. Ask yourself how many servings you're eating.

**NUTRIENTS TO LIMIT:** Look for information about total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Aim to keep these low. Choose foods with less than 5 grams of total fat and less than 1 gram of saturated fat.

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

## 4 Rules for Healthy Restaurant Eating

Thanks to extra-large portions and calorie-dense dishes, it's easy to let menu choices derail your diet. But you can eat away from home without packing on the pounds, nutrition experts say. Just follow these rules:

**1 Choose wisely.** Look for locations that offer a wide variety of healthy meals and post nutritional information online. Skip buffets and all-you-can-eat specials, which encourage overeating.

**2 Watch for red-flag words.** Limit dishes described as crispy, fried, creamy, au gratin, cheesy, buttery, pan-fried, rich, or breaded. Instead, look for the terms baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, or steamed.

**3 Mind your alcohol.** Stick to one drink for women, two for men. Booze boosts your appetite and adds calories but no nutrition.

**4 Eat slowly.** Rush through your dish, and you may end up overstuffed.



### WHAT SHOULD YOU PUT ON YOUR PLATE?

For more healthy food choices, visit the Bermuda Dietitians Association at [www.eatwellbermuda.org](http://www.eatwellbermuda.org) and click on "Healthy Eating Guidelines."

## Mixed Medicines Worsen Health Issues



Many older adults take a drug for one condition that may make another health issue worse. For example, your heart medicine could trigger a relapse of depression. Too often, doctor's guidelines don't take into account what happens when these regimens combine.

What's more, medications can also interact with food, supplements, or over-the-counter drugs. For instance, some medicines don't work as well when taken with dairy or grapefruit juice.

Work with your doctor and pharmacist to help ensure your medicines promote rather than tear down your health. Here are some tips:

- Keep an up-to-date list of all the medications you take. Don't forget over-the-counter drugs and supplements. Ask your doctor to review it at every visit.
- Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy. This way, your pharmacist can alert you of any dangerous drug combinations.
- Ask detailed questions. Each time your doctor suggests a new drug, find out what it's for, how it works, and how to use it.
- Read and save any printed material that comes with your medicines.



# Good Health by the Numbers

LIFE CAN'T ALWAYS BE MEASURED BY NUMBERS. But when it comes to your health, knowing certain numbers—your cholesterol, blood glucose, and blood pressure levels, for instance—may help motivate you to keep them in healthy ranges or work to get them there.

The charts below can help you track and monitor essential health targets for you and your family.

## HDL (“Good”) Cholesterol

Level	Category
60 mg/dl and higher	Healthy
40–59 mg/dl	Approaching healthy
Less than 40 mg/dl	Unhealthy

## LDL (“Bad”) Cholesterol

New guidelines say research doesn't support *one size fits all* ranges of healthy and unhealthy LDL. Treatment needs vary based on gender, race, age, health history, and other heart-disease risk factors. Consult your doctor.

## Triglycerides

Level	Category
Less than 150 mg/dl	Normal
150–199 mg/dl	Borderline high
200–499 mg/dl	High
500 mg/dl and higher	Very high

## Blood Pressure

Level	Category
120/80 mmHg	Normal
120–139/80–89 mmHg	Prehypertension
140–159/90–99 mmHg	Mild hypertension
160 or more/100 mmHg or more	Moderate to severe hypertension

## Blood Glucose

Level	Category
Up to 100 mg/dl	Normal
100–125 mg/dl	Prediabetes
126 mg/dl or higher	Diabetes



### DO YOU KNOW YOUR NUMBERS?

Ask your doctor at your next visit.

[www.bfm.bm](http://www.bfm.bm)

## BF&M Overseas Healthcare Toll-Free Helpline

BF&M Medical Assistance is available 24/7 with our toll-free numbers:

- 1-888-674-1367 (from Bermuda)
- 1-877-236-2338 (from outside Bermuda)
- 1-519-251-5186 (from Bermuda: collect calls)
- 1-519-251-5185 (from outside Bermuda: collect calls)

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## BF&M Wellness Matters!

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## INSURANCE MATTERS FOR HEALTH

### Personal Medical Guidance



### Do you need to know more about your medical condition?

Personal Medical Guidance will help you make sense of recommendations, present an easy-to-understand summary, and help you formulate questions to discuss with your doctor.

For more details, call 295-5566, visit [www.bfm.bm](http://www.bfm.bm) or email [bfm@bfm.bm](mailto:bfm@bfm.bm).

**BF&M** insurance *matters*

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