Diabetes myths and facts

**MYTH - You can't eat sugar if you have diabetes.**

**FACT** - A person living with diabetes can have small amounts of added sugar and foods containing natural sugars just like our entire population. There is no special 'diabetic' diet and people with diabetes should follow the same healthy eating guidelines as all Australians. Healthy eating consists of enjoying a variety of the five food groups and just like everyone, enjoying cakes, biscuits, chocolate and ice-cream sometimes (and not the 'sugar free' or 'diabetic' type).

**MYTH - People with diabetes should eat special diabetic foods.**

**FACT** - Diabetic foods generally offer no special benefit and most of them still raise blood glucose levels, are usually higher in kilojoules/calories and fats and are usually more expensive.

**MYTH – Some diabetes is more serious than others.**

**FACT** - All diabetes is serious. If blood glucose levels are not maintained within an individuals target range diabetes related complications can arise, no matter what the type. Some people may just manage their diabetes differently. For example, some may use healthy eating and exercise where others require medications or insulin.

**MYTH – If a person with type 2 diabetes commences insulin for management it means they have not managed their diabetes well.**

**FACT** – Type 2 diabetes is a progressive condition, which means a person's insulin production can reduce overtime meaning they will require insulin injections to manage diabetes. This does
not mean they become a person with type 1 diabetes and it is not their fault.

**MYTH - If you above your healthiest weight range, you will develop type 2 diabetes.**

FACT: Carrying extra weight, especially around the abdominal area, is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. However, there are other risk factors such as having a family history of type 2 diabetes, coming from an Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander background, ethnicity, age, a history of cardiovascular disease and a history of gestational diabetes. Unfortunately many people think that weight is the only risk factor for type 2 diabetes. Many people carrying extra weight never develop type 2 diabetes, and many people who are within their healthiest weight range develop type 2 diabetes.

**More information**

- [What is diabetes](#)
- [Workplace information pack](#)
- [AusDrisk tool](#)
- [Information sheets](#)
- [Brochures and booklets](#)
- [Online learning](#)

**NDSS**

The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia.