

# Know The Facts: Five Biggest Myths About Diabetes

(NAPS)—For 30 million Americans, diabetes is an everyday reality. Diabetes can affect every decision, including what they eat, wear and do. Yet the 24/7 management of diabetes is often misunderstood, carrying a social burden, as too many Americans wrongfully assume the disease is the result of poor choices.

The American Diabetes Association is setting the record straight. Here's what's real and what's not when it comes to diabetes:

**Myth:** Being overweight causes diabetes.

**Fact:** Being overweight is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes but it's not the only one. Family history, ethnicity and age also play a significant role. In fact, people with type 2 diabetes are often at a normal weight or only moderately overweight.

**Myth:** Diabetes is caused by eating sugar.

**Fact:** Type 1 diabetes is a disease, in which the immune system attacks insulin-producing beta cells. Type 2 diabetes is caused by the body's inability to use the insulin it produces and progresses so that less insulin is produced over time. Eating sugar doesn't cause either type, though a diet high in calories can contribute to weight gain, which increases one's risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

**Myth:** Taking insulin means you have failed to manage your diabetes properly.

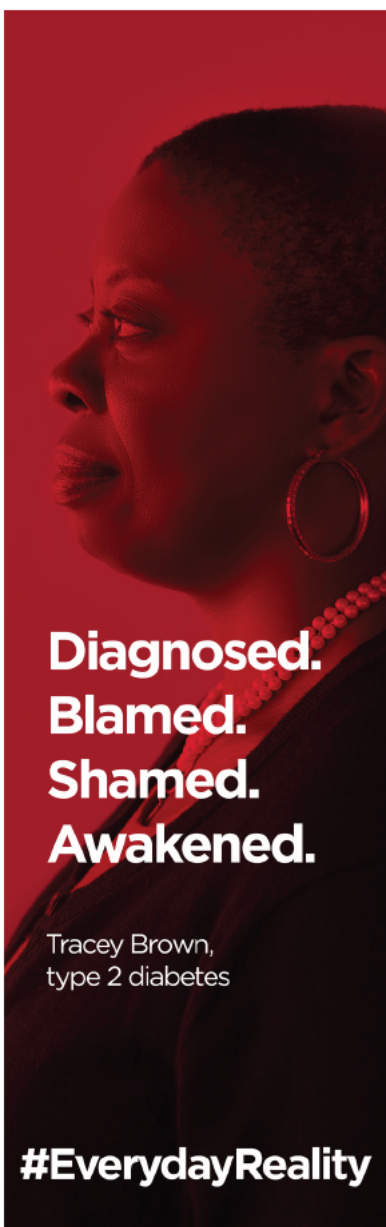
**Fact:** Type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease. Over time, the body gradually produces less and less of its own insulin to keep blood glucose levels in a healthy range, so insulin is needed. People with type 1 diabetes require insulin to survive.

**Myth:** People with diabetes need to eat special foods and can't eat sweets.

**Fact:** A healthy meal plan for people with diabetes is generally the same as a healthy eating plan for anyone: low in saturated fat and moderate in salt and sugar, with meals based on lean protein, nonstarchy vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and fruit. People with diabetes can eat sweets and desserts. The key to sweets for everyone is small portions.

**Myth:** Diabetes isn't that serious.

**Fact:** Diabetes causes more deaths per year than breast cancer and AIDS combined, and nearly doubles your



**Diagnosed.  
Blamed.  
Shamed.  
Awakened.**

Tracey Brown,  
type 2 diabetes

**#EverydayReality**



chance of having a heart attack. The good news is that managing diabetes can reduce your risk of such complications.

For more information, go to [www.diabetes.org/everydayreality](http://www.diabetes.org/everydayreality).