

# Diabetes and Tobacco

## FACT SHEET



## Diabetes

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Diabetes damages the vascular system. When people with diabetes smoke, the risk of developing cardiovascular disease rises dramatically. Maine has the highest rate of smoking among people with diabetes in New England.

## National Facts and Trends

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- In the past 15 years, the number of people in the United States with diagnosed diabetes has more than doubled—reaching 14.6 million in 2005—and an additional 6.2 million people do not even know they have the disease.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 41 million U.S. adults aged 40–74 years have pre-diabetes, which means that their blood sugar level is elevated enough to place them at high risk for developing diabetes.<sup>2</sup>
- Men and women who smoke are at approximately 50% greater risk of developing diabetes compared to men and women who do not smoke.<sup>3</sup>

## Maine Facts and Trends

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- Of adults in Maine with diabetes, 16.2% are current smokers, as compared to 21.2% of adults without diabetes.<sup>4</sup> People with diabetes tend to be older, and smoking rates for older people are lower than the average rate. However, one in six diabetic people are smoking. The age-adjusted smoking rate in 2002 was 27.2%.<sup>5</sup>
- In Maine, 7.4% of the population or 75,053 people report having diabetes; 3.7% have pre-diabetes bringing the total to 108,080.<sup>5</sup>
- New data show that up to 40% of Maine people ages 40–74 or 201,834 people have pre-diabetes. Diabetes-related hospitalizations increased 13% from the year 1996 to 2002.<sup>5</sup>
- Data from Maine's mortality records from 1979 through 2000 show a 62% increase in deaths attributable to diabetes. The increase could be even greater because diabetes is thought to be under-reported on death certificates (as a secondary cause of death, for example).<sup>5</sup>

# The Story Behind the Facts: Why Is this Information Important

- In 2002, the estimated total cost of diabetes in the United States was \$132 billion.<sup>8</sup>
- Smoking raises blood sugar levels and cuts the body's ability to use insulin. Smoking one cigarette reduces the body's ability to use insulin by 15%.<sup>6,7</sup>
- People with diabetes are three times as likely to die of cardiovascular disease. Smoking and diabetes together make a person 11 times more likely to die of a heart attack or stroke.<sup>6,7</sup>
- People with diabetes who smoke are twice as likely to have circulation and wound-healing problems. These can lead to leg and foot infections, sometimes requiring amputation.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Smokers with diabetes are more likely to suffer the complications of diabetes:<sup>6,7</sup>
  - o Nerve damage (neuropathy)
  - o Kidney damage (nephropathy)
  - o Vision loss or blindness
  - o Dental disease, bleeding gums, and ulcers
  - o Circulation problems, wound-healing problems, which may lead to amputation
  - o Muscle and joint pain
  - o Impotence
  - o Nerve damage

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> American Diabetes Association, "Total Prevalence of Diabetes and Pre-diabetes," <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-statistics.jsp>.
- <sup>2</sup> CDC, National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2005, [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2005.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2005.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> JAMA and Archives Journals (Dec. 12, 2007). Smoking Associated With Increased Risk Of Diabetes, Study Finds. *ScienceDaily*, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/12/071211234048.htm>.
- <sup>4</sup> Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2006.
- <sup>5</sup> Health Fact Sheet: Diabetes in Maine, <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bohdcfh/dcp/documents/Factsheet05.pdf>.
- <sup>6</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, August 2003, Diabetes & Smoking: Why Take the Risk? <http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/diabetes/diabetes&smoking.pdf>.
- <sup>7</sup> (American Diabetes Association)
- <sup>8</sup> Lundgren Laboratory for Diabetes Research, Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Goteborg, Sweden. *Prog Cardiovascular Disease* (Mar–Apr 2003) 45 (50): 405–13.



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