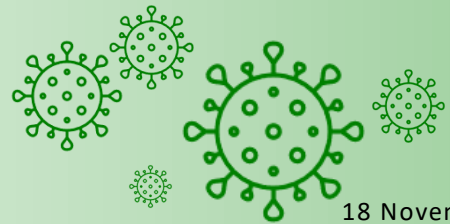




# COVID CORNER

Exploring the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on our lives



18 November 2022

## Diabetes Awareness Month

### The importance of diabetes education

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Education to protect tomorrow", focusing on the need for quality diabetes education for health professionals and people living with diabetes.

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood sugar (called blood glucose) is too high. Blood glucose comes from the food you eat. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose get into your cells to be used for energy. Sometimes your body doesn't make enough — or any—insulin or doesn't use insulin well. Glucose then stays in your blood and doesn't reach your cells. Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause health problems like nerve damage, cardiovascular disease, vision problems, and other complications.

### Different types of diabetes

**Type 1 Diabetes:** An autoimmune disorder that typically begins before adulthood, in which the immune system destroys cells within the body that make insulin

**Type 2 Diabetes:** A disease that usually begins in middle age, often as a result of an unhealthy diet and lifestyle

**Gestational Diabetes:** A condition during pregnancy in which the body doesn't use insulin properly, similar to Type 2 diabetes

### Diabetes in South Africa

Diabetes prevalence in South Africa has reached 11.3%, the highest in Africa. Around 263 South Africans die every day from diabetes, which is the second leading underlying cause of death in South Africa. It is estimated that over half of diabetics remain undiagnosed, however.

### COVID-19 and diabetes

Diabetics are more likely to have serious complications from COVID-19, but your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 is lowered if your diabetes is well-managed.

People who get COVID-19 have a greater risk of developing diabetes up to a year later, even after a mild infection.

### Managing diabetes

There is no cure for diabetes, but you can take steps to manage your diabetes and stay healthy.



## Fast Facts

- Diabetes is a huge health problem in South Africa
- Educating health professionals and the general public about diabetes is critical
- One of the biggest causes of Type 2 diabetes is poor lifestyle choices
- Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight is important to prevent Type 2 diabetes
- Although diabetes has no cure, it can be managed with medication and a healthy lifestyle

## Want to find out more?

**Diabetes South Africa:**  
<https://www.diabetessa.org.za/>

**What is diabetes?**  
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes>

**Take the diabetes risk test:**  
<https://defeatdiabetes.org/diabetes-screening-test/>

**COVID-19 and diabetes:**  
<https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/diabetes-and-coronavirus>

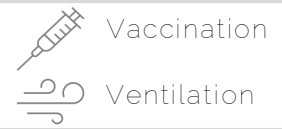
## Ask Dr M

**Do you still have questions?**  
Call us on **0800 24 36 72**  
or WhatsApp **082 735 4472**



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