



Age, Race, Gender & Family History

Many things affect your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Some of these things, like your weight and how much you exercise, you can change. Other things, like your age or your family history, you can't change. But being aware of them can help you take smart steps to lower your risk.

Things you can't change:

- [Age](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Age) (<http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Age>)
- [Race](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Race) (<http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Race>)
- [Gender](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Gender) (<http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Gender>)
- [Family history](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Family_History) (http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/lower-your-risk/nonmodifiables.html#Family_History)

Age

As you get older, your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke goes up. There's nothing you can do about getting older, but you can take steps to eat healthy, stay active and manage your weight. And talk with your doctor about your cholesterol, blood pressure and blood glucose. Make sure your numbers are where they should be and, if they're not, work with your doctor to set target numbers that are right for you.

Race

People of different racial and ethnic groups are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. [African Americans](http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/african-american-programs/) (<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/african-american-programs/>), [Mexican Americans](http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/latino-programs/) (<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/latino-programs/>), [American Indians](http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/american-indian-programs/) (<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/american-indian-programs/>), [Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans](http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/aanhpi/) (<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/awareness-programs/aanhpi/>) have a higher risk for these deadly diseases. This is partly because these populations are more likely to be overweight, have high blood pressure and have type 2 diabetes.

Gender

Whether you're male or female also affects how likely you are to develop heart disease. Men are more likely to develop heart disease. But once a woman reaches menopause, her risk for heart disease goes up. But even then, women still aren't as likely as men.

Family History

If your mother, father, sister, or brother has heart disease or diabetes, your risk goes up. If you don't know your family history, ask. Ask your parents, aunts and uncles if anyone in your family has had type 2 diabetes, heart disease or stroke. Then tell your doctor what you learn so you can make a plan to lower your risk.

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Articles from *Diabetes Forecast*® magazine: (<http://www.diabetesforecast.org>)

(<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/become-a-member/?loc=articles>)
[Pneumococcal Disease and Other Vaccinations \(http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/05-sep-oct/pneumococcal-disease-and.html?loc=morefrom\)](http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/05-sep-oct/pneumococcal-disease-and.html?loc=morefrom)

[Why Does Diabetes Increase Your Risk for Pneumococcal Disease?
\(http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/05-sep-oct/why-does-diabetes-increase.html?loc=morefrom\)](http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/05-sep-oct/why-does-diabetes-increase.html?loc=morefrom)

[Recognizing, Treating, and Preventing Diabetic Eye Disease
\(http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/01-jan-feb/recognizing-treating-and.html?loc=morefrom\)](http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2018/01-jan-feb/recognizing-treating-and.html?loc=morefrom)

[Race and Type 1 Diabetes \(http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2017/nov-dec/race-and-type-1-diabetes.html?loc=morefrom\)](http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2017/nov-dec/race-and-type-1-diabetes.html?loc=morefrom)

[How to Avoid and Fight Chronic Inflammation \(http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2017/nov-dec/how-to-avoid-and-fight.html?loc=morefrom\)](http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2017/nov-dec/how-to-avoid-and-fight.html?loc=morefrom)

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