

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S
EDUCATION AND
DEFENSE FUND,
INC.

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Our Mission

* Develop and institutionalize programs addressing the grave disparities in education, health, healthcare, and economic development faced by the African community.

* Defend the human and civil rights of African people.

Healthy Connections

APRIL 2008

Ten Ways African People Can Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

by National Diabetes Education Program

We are urging people at high risk for type 2 diabetes to take small steps to lower their risk for the disease and serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, nerve damage, and other health problems.

Take the first step today. Find out from a health care provider if you are at risk for type 2 diabetes. Before a person develops type 2 diabetes, they usually have pre-diabetes, which means their blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be called diabetes. People with pre-diabetes are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years and to have a heart attack or stroke.

Although African Americans are at high risk for type 2 diabetes, there is good news. You can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes by making small lifestyle changes in diet and physical activity. Follow these tips to help you prevent or delay type 2 diabetes:

1. **Set goals you can meet and start by making small changes.** First, set a goal you can achieve. Add one or two healthy changes every week.
2. **Aim to lose at least 5 to 7 percent of your current weight – that's 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person.** The key to preventing type 2 diabetes is to lose weight by making healthy food choices and being physically active. Lose a small amount of weight by getting at least 30 minutes of

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Colonialism is Bad for Your Health!

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Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

physical activity a day, five days a week and eating foods lower in calories and fat.

3. For support, team up with friends and family to help you lower your risk for type 2 diabetes.

Ask your family and friends to help you stick to your program. Involve them in your activities. You can help each other move more, eat less, and live a healthier life. Be active with your family by going on a walk together after dinner or playing a pick-up game of basketball. Replace watching TV with an activity that gets everyone moving.

4. Make healthy food choices every day. Start with small changes, like ordering the smallest size meal instead of the larger, super-sized version at fast-food restaurants. Choose carbs that have lots of fiber such as fresh fruits and vegetables from every color of the rainbow—red, orange, yellow, white, green, blue, and purple. Eat calcium-rich foods such as low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese.

5. Make time to prepare and cook healthy foods. Freeze portions so you

have healthy meals ready for days when you're too tired or don't have time to cook. Instead of fried chicken, try it grilled, baked, or broiled. Use vegetable or canola oil when you choose to fry. For a main dish, try low-fat macaroni and cheese served with your favorite vegetable and a salad. A baked sweet potato topped with reduced-fat or fat-free sour cream is a good option for a side dish.

6. Cut down on food portion sizes. The portion size that you are used to eating may be equal to two or three standard servings – which equals double or triple the calories and fat! Portion sizes are often smaller than you think. Compare serving sizes to everyday objects. For example, one serving of cereal is about the size of a closed fist. Three ounces of lean meat or fish is about the size of a deck of cards.

7. Choose water to drink instead of sweetened fruit drinks and soda. Find a water bottle you really like from your church, community organization, or favorite sports team and drink water from it wherever and whenever you can. Drink a

glass of water 10 minutes before your meal to take the edge off your hunger.

8. Increase your activity level by walking more often. Schedule walking dates with friends or family members throughout the week. Organize a walking group with your neighbors, co-workers, or church members. Take your dog – or a friend's dog – for a brisk walk.

9. Build physical activity into your day. Show the younger people in your life the dances you used to do when you were their age. Turn up the music and jam to the beat of NDEP's *Step by Step* CD or your favorite music while doing household chores. Take the stairs instead of the elevator to your office. Deliver a message in person to a co-worker instead of sending an email.

10. For more ways to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes, check out NDEP's free resources. Order the *More Than 50 Ways to Prevent Diabetes* tip sheet for African Americans and other resources by calling 1-888-693-6337 or visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes.*

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Colorectal Cancer and African People

Colorectal cancer is the second overall cause of cancer death in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 145,290 new cases were diagnosed in 2005, and 56,290 deaths occurred. Both men and women can develop cancer of the colon and rectum, and their risk increases over the age of 50.

African Americans are particularly affected by colorectal cancer and have a higher incidence and mortality from colon cancer than non-African Americans.

What we know

The number of new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed each year in African Americans has not decreased. Of equal concern, is that:

- African Americans tend to be diagnosed with colon cancer at a younger age than whites.
- African Americans die sooner from colon cancer once diagnosed.

These differences may be due to:

- Not seeing a health care professional regularly. Not undergoing colon cancer screening in a timely manner.
- Lifestyle habits
- Eating a diet high in fat, red meat, or processed meat.
- Physical inactivity and obesity
- Tobacco
- Alcohol

Screening for Colon Cancer

Screening can in most cases prevent the development of colon cancer by removal of precancerous polyps before they progress to cancer.

Also, if colorectal cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, the chance of a surgical cure is good, and 5 year survival is 90%. For average-risk individuals (people without symptoms and without a family history of colon cancer), there are several recommended screening options.

Colonoscopy is gaining acceptance as the preferred screening method since it has a therapeutic potential to identify and remove polyps throughout the entire colon.

Other screening options include flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, annual fecal occult blood testing (FOBT), and double contract barium enema every 5 years. Each screening test has advantages and limitations that should be discussed with your doctor.

Emerging research also suggests that African Americans are more likely than whites to have precancerous polyps and colon cancer in the proximal colon, which could potentially be missed if screening was done by flexible sigmoidoscopy alone.

What You Can Do

In response to the higher incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer among African Americans, the American College of Gastroenterology recommends screening at the age of 45 rather than age 50.

Current research data also suggests colonoscopy may be the preferred screening procedure rather than flexible sigmoidoscopy because of the greater prevalence of proximal polyps and proximal cancers in African Americans.

People commonly have questions, misconceptions, and fears about the need for colon cancer screening. Talk to a primary care physician about screening which is one of the most powerful weapons in preventing colon cancer.

To learn more about colon cancer, check out www.NetWellness.org

Go to the African American Health topic, where you can:

- Read articles on this topic
- Browse the previously asked questions
- Ask your own question.
- Read other health articles

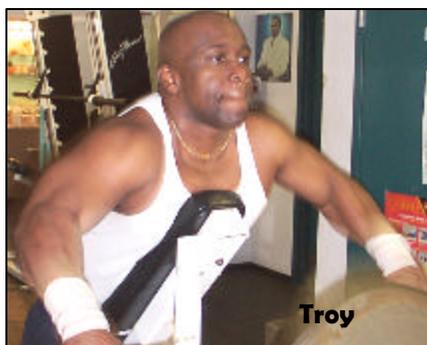
Also check out these websites focusing on African health:

www.blackhealthcare.com

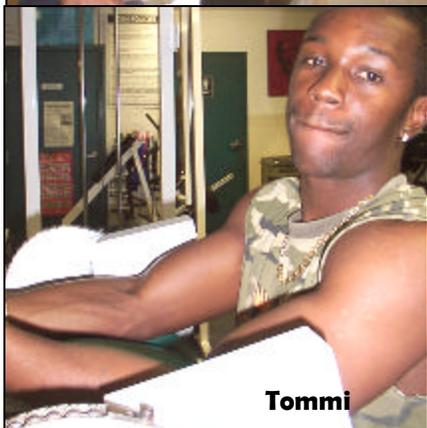
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- Help write articles and take photos for the Healthy Connections Newsletter!
- Help plan, promote and conduct the free monthly health education seminars. Upcoming topics include Massage and Supplemental Vitamins, AIDS, Stroke, Obesity, Heart Disease, and Arthritis