

# HUNGER HEALTH EQUITY



## Spotlight on Diabetes



Feeding America is collaborating with the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists to raise awareness about diabetes and its connection to food insecurity and health equity. Together, we can help people facing hunger get the help they need to prevent, delay, or manage diabetes.

Diabetes affects 34.2 million, or 1 in 10, American adults, and is the seventh leading cause of adult death in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects how the body turns food into energy. While there are several types of diabetes, most cases are identified as Type 1 (5-10%) or Type 2 (90-95%). If left untreated, diabetes can lead to other serious health conditions, such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease.

### Managing diabetes

Diabetes care and education specialists are healthcare professionals who specialize in supporting people to manage their health every day. The ADCES7 Self-Care Behaviors™ help people make the best decisions they can about how to manage their prediabetes or diabetes. By discussing healthy coping, healthy eating, being active, taking medication, monitoring, reducing risk, and problem solving with their healthcare team, people with prediabetes and diabetes can live healthier lives and prevent serious complications.



### Healthy eating

According to Hunger in America 2014, Feeding America estimated that 33% of the households it serves include someone diagnosed with diabetes.<sup>2</sup> Building a healthy eating pattern is critical to maintain good health, well-being, and to prevent, delay, or manage diabetes. However, social, structural and systemic inequities have contributed to higher rates of food insecurity and diabetes for Black, Latino, Native American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander individuals.

To overcome these inequities, new approaches are needed to ensure that everyone has access to culturally appropriate healthy food, unbiased health care, and essential resources that improve overall health and well-being. Community stakeholders, including food banks, food pantries, non-profits, public health and health care organizations can work together to support individuals in accessing nutritious foods. Feeding America's A Closer Look series provides ways you can take action in your community and includes "real-life" stories of progress.

## FAST STATS

7.3 million adults aged 18 years or older who met criteria for diabetes were not aware of or did not report having diabetes in 2018. This number represents 21.4% of all U.S. adults with diabetes.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018, the percentage of diagnosed diabetes was highest among Native Americans/Alaska Natives (14.7%), Hispanic (12.5%), and non-Hispanic black populations (11.7%), followed by Asian American and Pacific Islander populations (9.2%) and non-Hispanic whites (7.5%).<sup>3</sup>

The risk of diabetes among those who are food insecure is about two times higher than those who are not food insecure.<sup>4</sup>

Percentage of Adults Aged 18 Years or Older With Diagnosed Diabetes, by Racial or Ethnic Group, United States, 2017-2018

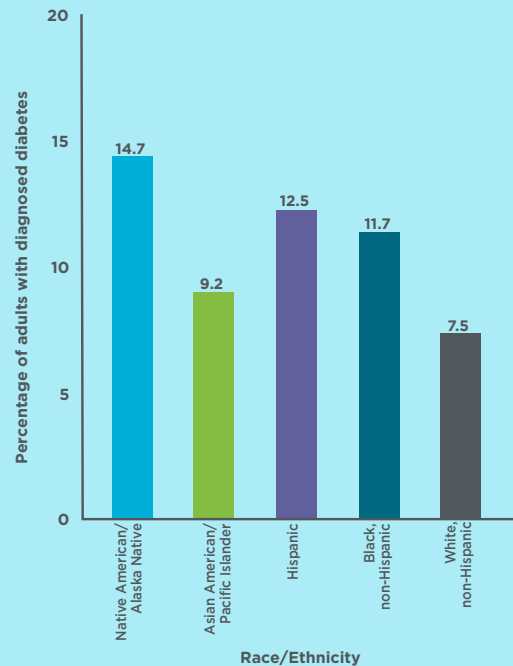
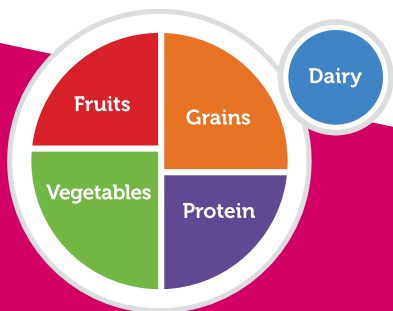


Figure adapted from CDC's National Diabetes Statistics Report 2019. [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/library/Diabetes-Report-Card-2019-508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/library/Diabetes-Report-Card-2019-508.pdf)



### MyPlate.gov

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	1/2 PLATE
WHOLE GRAINS	1/4 PLATE
FISH AND OTHER LEAN PROTEINS	1/4 PLATE
LOW FAT OR FAT-FREE DAIRY	3 CUPS

- Food low in saturated and trans fats
- Low sodium options
- Low sugar options



## Stories from the Field

Prior to the pandemic, food insecurity impacted 16.6% of the population in the greater Houston region of Texas, and the challenges of the pandemic have only made the situation worse. Inspired to create sustainable change and solve issues like food insecurity, the Greater Houston Coalition for Social Determinants of Health was created to cultivate collaborations between stakeholders from health care, social services, government, and industry to develop effective solutions to address social factors to improve health outcomes.

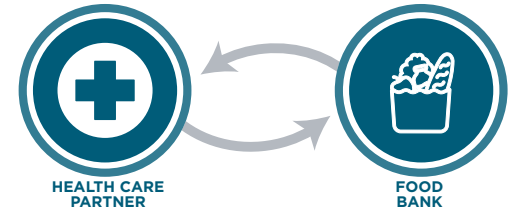
One example of this collaboration is between Harris Health, the county health care system, and the **Houston Food Bank**. Harris Health provides quality care to those most in need within Harris County with a focus on community integrated health hubs. The Houston Food Bank is the largest food bank in the country providing hunger relief to 18 counties in southeast Texas.

The collaboration between Harris Health and the Houston Food Bank led to onsite *Food Farmacies*, free food markets co-located with clinics. These *Food Farmacies* allow clinic patients who are experiencing both diabetes and food insecurity to get healthy food to address both issues. Every two weeks, each patient receives 30 pounds of fruits and vegetables and four healthy food items (e.g. whole-grain rice, beans or meats). As patients walk the aisles of the *Food Farmacy*, they receive a guided tour with nutrition education from a patient educator or registered dietitian.

The *Food Farmacies* have opened at three Harris Health sites: **Strawberry Clinic** in Pasadena, **Acres Homes** neighborhood and Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital in Houston. Each community experiences high rates of food insecurity and chronic disease, and serves predominantly low-income residents with greater than 75% representing the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community.



## TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY TOGETHER



*"It's important to identify people's needs and meet them where they are. Partnering with Harris Health allows us to get healthy food to people who need it in a way that respects their time and reduces their stress."*

**Staff member,**  
Houston Food Bank



## Take Action! Address diabetes and hunger.



**CONVENE** health care, food/hospitality, education, social service, and other community partners to identify and develop solutions to hunger and health barriers within the community.



**PRIORITIZE** increasing access to affordable food, health care and medication; addressing the social determinants of health; eliminating health disparities; and amplifying community voice.



**BUILD TRUST** through positive interactions and communication with communities and engage in developing strategies to address the unique and complex needs of people facing hunger, while eliminating bias, recognizing we are all in this together.



**DESIGN** culturally appropriate diet, nutrition, and health resources and make them available in local clinics, grocery stores, food banks and pantries, community centers, schools and places of worship.



**ADVOCATE** for policy, systems and environmental change approaches that support increased nutritious food access and improved health and well-being for community members in greatest need

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fast Stats- Diabetes. 2021. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/diabetes.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/diabetes.htm)

<sup>2</sup>Hunger in America 2014 | Feeding America. 2014. Retrieved September 14, 2021, [www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america](http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america)

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Diabetes Report Card. 2019. [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/library/Diabetes-Report-Card-2019-508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/library/Diabetes-Report-Card-2019-508.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Seligman, H. K., Bindman, A. B., Vittinghoff, E., Kanaya, A. M., & Kushel, M. B. (2007). Food insecurity is associated with diabetes mellitus: results from the National Health Examination and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2002. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 22(7), 1018-1023. [doi.org/10.1007/s11606-007-0192-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-007-0192-6)



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