

# Experts: 366 million people now have diabetes

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An estimated 366 million people worldwide now suffer from diabetes and the global epidemic is getting worse, health officials said Tuesday.

The International Diabetes Federation described the number of cases as "staggering," with one person dying from diabetes every seven seconds.

The federation called for concrete measures to stop the epidemic, urging officials focusing on chronic diseases at a United Nations meeting next week to commit to specific targets to prevent cases and to invest in more research. Experts also said [diabetes care](#) should be integrated into local health clinics.

"The clock is ticking for the world's leaders," Jean Claude Mbanya, the group's president, said in a statement. "We expect action from their meeting next week at the United Nations that will halt diabetes' relentlessly upwards trajectory."

The figures were announced in Lisbon, Portugal, during the European meeting of the group, an umbrella organization that represents associations from more than 160 countries.

It estimated that diabetes causes 4.6 million deaths every year and that health systems spend \$465 billion annually fighting the disease. That includes both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes mainly affects children and young adults, who are

unable to make insulin. Type 2 diabetes is more common and is often tied to obesity. It develops when the body doesn't produce enough insulin to break down glucose, inflating [blood sugar levels](#).

The disease can be managed with diet, exercise and medication but chronically [high blood sugar](#) levels causes [nerve damage](#), which can result in kidney disease, blindness and amputation.

In June, a study published in the medical journal Lancet estimated the global number of diabetes had more than doubled in the last three decades and put the figure at 347 million.

Experts said much of the rise in diabetes cases was due to aging populations - since diabetes typically hits in middle age - and population growth, but that [obesity rates](#) had also fueled the disease's spread.

**More information:** <http://www.easd.org>

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