

# Canada's First Nations people face greater diabetes risk

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(HealthDay)—Diabetes is more widespread among descendants of

people who lived in Canada before Europeans arrived than among the general population, a new study shows.

About 8 of 10 First Nations people will develop diabetes at a young age, compared to roughly half of all Canadians, the University of Calgary researchers found. More than 2.25 million people in Canada have the blood sugar disease.

Researchers hope their findings will lead to new prevention programs. Lifestyle changes, such as a healthy diet and regular exercise, help reduce diabetes risk.

"The changes required to achieve these objectives will need buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders. Thus, it will be important to communicate risk in a way that is understood by the general population and by health authorities," the study authors wrote.

To gauge Canadians' lifetime risk of diabetes, researchers looked at about 2.8 million people who did not have diabetes. Of these, about 70,600 were First Nations people, and 2.7 million were part of Alberta's general population.

The study, published Sept. 19 in the journal *CMAJ*, reported nine of 10 First Nations women will develop diabetes, as will 7 of 10 First Nations men. In the [general population](#), men have a greater diabetes risk than women.

First Nations people are also likely to be diagnosed with diabetes much earlier in life, the researchers found. First Nations women develop diabetes 30 years before other women; First Nations men get it 20 years before other Canadian men.

"These findings, coupled with the observations that younger people had a

higher [lifetime risk](#) of diabetes than their older counterparts, indicate the importance of early mobilization of preventive measures against the development of diabetes among First Nations people," the study authors said in a journal news release.

Lead author of the study was Tanvir Chowdhury Turin, research director and assistant professor in the department of family medicine at the University of Calgary.

**More information:** The American Diabetes Association provides more information on [diabetes](#).

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