



# Diabetes

among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition around the world

There are two main types of diabetes:

Type 1  
Type 2

Type 2 diabetes has become a worldwide epidemic.

Diabetes causes high blood sugar levels that can lead to **serious damage** to many of the body's systems.



Indigenous people and socially disadvantaged people tend to experience higher rates of diabetes.

In Australia  
**7.9%**

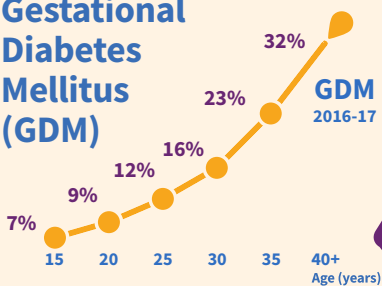
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people self-reported having diabetes in 2018-19.

Prevalence increased with age and it was more prevalent in remote areas compared to non-remote areas.



HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

## Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)



GDM can lead to complications for the mother and child during pregnancy, at birth and after birth.

In 2017-18, around **13%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers who gave birth were diagnosed with GDM. GDM increased with age, with **32% of mothers over 40 years of age** having GDM.



## Preventive strategies need to address:

### Modifiable health risk factors:



healthy food



no smoking



reduced alcohol consumption



exercise

### Social determinants of health:

poverty, culture, racism, employment, education and food security.



### Family and child health needs:

pregnancy and early years programs.



The **good news** is that people with type 2 diabetes can reduce the risk of developing diabetes complications through healthy lifestyle changes.

NORMAL BLOOD SUGAR

It is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, health workers and practitioners are involved in designing programs for the prevention, early detection and management of diabetes.

**Culturally appropriate health checks**, education about diabetes health risks and self-management will ensure that treatment and management are delivered sensitively, and in a way **culturally acceptable to the broader community**.

