



Information in this article, originally published May 1, 2007, was corrected May 2, 2007. A previous version of this story incorrectly stated the death rates of diabetes in southeast Seattle and on Mercer Island. The average annual death rate for diabetes is about 40 per 100,000 population in southeast Seattle and about 10 per 100,000 population on Mercer Island. In addition, obesity and insufficient of exercise are risk factors for type 2 diabetes, but not type 1, which was not made clear.

Diabetes rate soars, county report finds

By [Warren King](#)

Seattle Times medical reporter

Diabetes prevalence has more than doubled among King County residents during the past decade, with nearly 6 percent of the population now suffering from the disease.

About 84,000 people in King County have been diagnosed with the often-debilitating illness, 13,400 others are on the borderline, and many more don't know they have it, according to a report released Monday by Public Health — Seattle & King County.

As in the rest of the nation, the increase is blamed on obesity and a lack of physical exercise. Nearly a fifth of King County residents are considered obese.

"Obesity is becoming increasingly common, suggesting that the **diabetes** prevalence will continue to increase in the future," Public Health researchers Lin Song, James Krieger and David Solet said in the report, the first such study in seven years.

Yet King County is better off than the rest of the country: About 5.6 percent of county residents (5.8 percent of adults) have been diagnosed, compared with 7.3 percent nationwide.

Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body doesn't make enough insulin or is resistant to insulin, leading to too much sugar in the blood. Without treatment, it can lead to serious complications, including heart attacks, kidney failure, blindness and foot or leg amputations. It is the seventh leading cause of death in the county.

Among other points in the King County report:

- The disease costs more than \$1 billion a year in treatment, lost work days, disabilities and other consequences. Hospitalizations cost nearly \$25 million.
- People of color are more likely to have **diabetes**. The prevalence among adult whites is 4.1 percent. Other adult prevalence: African American, 10.5 percent; Asian American, 6.8 percent; Pacific Islander, 13.3 percent; American Indian-Alaska Native, 7.2 percent; Hispanic, 6 percent.

- People with lower incomes have a higher risk. About 9 percent of adults with less than \$20,000 in annual income had the disease, compared with about 5 percent with more income.

- Geographically, the average annual death death **rate** was highest in southeast Seattle at about 40 per 100,000 population and lowest at 10 per 100,000 population on Mercer Island.

"Obesity is becoming increasingly common, suggesting that that **diabetes** prevalence will continue to increase in the future," Public Health researchers Lin Song, James Krieger and David Solet said in the report, the first such study in seven years. Obesity and insufficient exercise are not risk factors for type 1 **diabetes**, which occurs when the immune system attacks insulin-producing cells.

Diabetes health fair

What: A health fair for people with **diabetes** and others, featuring programs on new developments in **diabetes** care, stress management and emergency preparedness for **diabetes** patients. Advice on foot and dental care, meal planning and exercise.

When: noon-4 p.m. June 1

Where: Harborview Medical Center, Research and Training Building, 300 Ninth Ave., Seattle.

More information: Call Harborview's Patient and Family Resource Center at 206-731-2000.