

Diabetes 360° and Seniors

Overview

Diabetes is a disease that brings with it many serious health challenges and that disproportionately affects certain groups of Canadians. For example, seniors make up over half of the people living with diagnosed diabetes in Canada, and close to 40% of new diagnosed cases of diabetes in 2019 will occur in the senior population in Canada. Diabetes in the population of those 65+ is increasing, mostly due to prolonged life. But one in five seniors is diagnosed with diabetes yearly, compared to one in 10 of the younger cohorts. And for the first time in history, the number of adults aged 65 years and older in Canada exceeds the number of children.

Seniors living with diabetes have some added challenges, including mobility issues, changing socioeconomic situations, increased likeliness of loneliness and lack of support, and living with comorbidities. Seniors are more likely to be subject to health inequities that increase their risk of developing diabetes and its complications. Older patients with diabetes are more likely to be frail and progressive frailty has been associated with reduced function and increased mortality. Over 25% of people in long-term care facilities have type 2 diabetes.

Today, 1 in 3 Canadians lives with prediabetes or diabetes, and someone is newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes every 3 minutes. Diabetes complications are associated with premature death. Diabetes contributes to 30% of strokes, 40% of heart attacks, 50% of kidney failure requiring dialysis, and 70% of non-traumatic lower limb amputations every year. Its prevalence is growing at a rate of 40 per cent per decade and treating the disease will cost the Canadian health care system \$29 billion in 2019. Urgent action must be taken to end this epidemic.

A 360° Response to Canada's Diabetes Epidemic

Diabetes Canada and nearly 100 other organizations came together to develop a framework for a new diabetes national strategy, called Diabetes 360°. Diabetes 360° was built on a successful model implemented in the HIV/AIDS community that has been credited for transformational breakthroughs in the treatment and management of HIV/AIDS.

WITH DIABETES 360°, WE CAN HAVE:



The Diabetes 360° framework includes specific recommendations to improve prevention, screening, treatment and patient outcomes for diabetes. It suggests a plan that could deliver measurable results within less than seven years. All recommendations are based on extensive consultation and thorough review of the evidence.

Opportunities for Seniors in Canada

But what specifically might this mean for seniors in Canada? In short, all the recommendations of Diabetes 360° will help all Canadians at risk of or living with diabetes live more healthily. But there are some recommendations that have special relevance for people at risk of diabetes due to age. For example:

1. Measures to end food insecurity and promote regular physical activity will support seniors in living healthy lifestyles to **prevent** diabetes and its complications.
2. Greater adherence to the [Clinical Practice Guidelines](#) for **screening** will mean that seniors are more routinely screened for diabetes.
3. Increased use of virtual and telemedicine tools will bring quality **treatment** to seniors in their communities and ensure that everyone gets quality care when and where they need it.
4. Improved **access** to medications, devices and supplies needed to manage diabetes will ensure that no senior struggles to afford the care they need for diabetes.

5. A patient portal will help seniors in Canada access community-based supports for diabetes **self-management** near home.

A common framework with custom implementation

Diabetes 360° is a framework that is intended to be implemented differently in each province and territory, and possibly in each community, based on their unique priorities and needs. The detailed implementation of the strategy will be done *by* each community with support from the Diabetes 360° taskforce. Each community will be able to decide what programs they wish to put in place based on their needs. This will help to ensure that the needs of seniors are well met by Diabetes 360°.