



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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### World Diabetes Awareness Day Commemoration

**Pretoria:** The Department Health urges South Africans to know their diabetic and general health status through regular screening and testing, for early detection and successful treatment of this potentially life threatening condition in order to live a long and healthy lifestyle.

South Africa joins the global community to commemorate the World Diabetes Day to increase awareness about common symptoms and health risk factors associated with diabetes, and how to prevent and manage them before they can lead to devastating health complications such as stroke, nerve damage, blindness, kidney failure, heart attack and amputations.

The World Diabetes Day is observed globally every year on November 14, to raise awareness of diabetes as a global public health challenge and what needs to be done, collectively and individually for better prevention, timely diagnosis and successful management of the condition in order to improve patient health outcomes and reduce the long-term psychological stress, and costs associated with disease treatment.

The 2022 World Diabetes Day is commemorated under the theme: “**Access to diabetes education**” which calls for strengthened public education around the condition to empower the people with crucial health information such as the risk factors, signs and symptoms and treatment adherence in order to make well informed choices.

The main three common categories of diabetes include Type1 which develops when the blood glucose (sugar) level is too high because the body can only produces very little or no insulin. On the other hand, Type 2 diabetes is caused by several factors, including lifestyle factors such as obesity, lack of physical activity or having a family history of the condition. It is the most prevalent form of the condition, responsible for around 90% of all diabetes.

The last common type is Gestational diabetes mellitus which is a temporary condition that develops in women mostly during pregnancy due to high blood sugar levels, with potential to cause health problems in both mother and baby.

Maintenance of healthy lifestyles contributes towards prevention, control of the condition and the avoidance of serious complications which include depression and anxiety. Regular health screening can lead to early diagnosis, holistic treatment and control.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 420 million people are living with diabetes worldwide and the number of people living with diabetes is increasing, even though some types of diabetes can be largely prevented with healthy diets and physical activity.

Some of the preventable contributing risk factors to this chronic conditions include; tobacco users, physical inactivity, obesity, the harmful use of alcohol and eating unhealthy diets.

South Africa is amongst the 20 countries which proposed and committed to the reduction of the burden of non-communicable diseases through strengthening prevention and control of diabetes during the 74th World Health Assembly held in May 2021.

The department has been working closely with non-governmental organisations, development partner organisations academic and research institutions, to develop the five-year Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) for the period 2022-2027, as part of the coordinated efforts to intensify the fight against the NCDs like diabetes. This is in response to the burden of diabetes and other non-communicable conditions.

The implementation of this five-year plan is supported by policies and programmes meant to increase knowledge about diabetes, its prevalence and consequences, which will ultimately empower people to make informed health choices.

**For more information and media enquiries, please contact:**

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