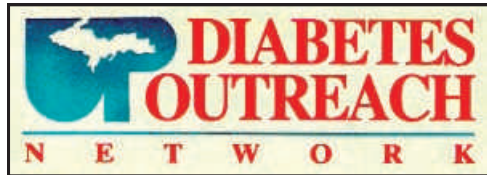




NATIONAL

# Diabetes

MONTH



[www.diabetesinmichigan.org](http://www.diabetesinmichigan.org)

American Diabetes Association  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)



Jim Daly, Executive Director of Camp Michigamme, has been living with diabetes since 1990. Prior to being diagnosed, Jim's doctor told him he was heading in that direction. Diabetes had been a part of Jim's family life for many years. All of his mother's brothers developed diabetes in their 40's and Jim's two brothers had diabetes.

Like many people with diabetes, Jim ended up taking several medications to control his blood sugar. Unfortunately, he wasn't doing many of the other things a person can do to keep blood sugar numbers

in check but Jim's life was about to change.

Jim's work as a medic in a rural area led him to the homes of many people with diabetes – people who either didn't have access to the care and tools they needed to manage their diabetes or people like himself who were living in denial about how devastating diabetes can be if not controlled. Interactions with these people prompted Jim to seriously think about his own health, his diabetes and how he might be on the path to developing diabetes complications.

It was around this same time that Jim's oldest brother died from complications of uncontrolled diabetes. Working as a medic and the death of his oldest brother prompted Jim to take charge of his diabetes. Along with his other brother he made a pact – they vowed to take charge of their health and of their diabetes while supporting each other along the way.

One of the things the brothers did was trade in their "diabetes cocktails" (an assortment of oral medications) for insulin. Many people with Type 2 diabetes can treat their diabetes with oral medications. Still many others may need insulin at some point in their lives, but like Jim and his brother, they put off making the change. Some people fear taking that step to using insulin.

Jim has found the changes he has made to be a big improvement. He now uses an insulin pump, which allows him to more easily adjust his insulin based on his often hectic schedule as a camp director. The pact Jim made with his brother and the changes that he's made to his life have resulted in overall better health and a weight loss of thirty pounds.

Jim has lots of advice for others who are living with diabetes. "First," Jim says, "get use to testing so you can learn what your body is doing. I can't guess what my blood sugar is unless it is very, very high or too low; neither of which are good. Second, remember that denial is not an effective treatment for diabetes. Third, see your diabetes educator at least once a year."

Since moving to Michigan Jim has made Bell physician Michael Grossman and diabetes educator Marli Carlson, RD, CDE important members of his healthcare team. They have provided him with guidance and, most importantly, education as he made his way through the lifestyle and management changes. They also help assure that Jim gets the necessary tests each year he needs to keep his health and diabetes on track and keep the complications at bay.

Finally, Jim's last piece of advice is, "Diabetes is always serious. You need to take control of it." And as Jim has seen first hand, denial with diabetes can equal death with diabetes. Take steps today to control your diabetes.

## Pre-diabetes: Are YOU at risk?

### What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert sugars and starches into energy for the body. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to kidney failure, heart disease, eye problems and nerve damage.

### Signs of Diabetes:

- Excessive thirst
- Needing to urinate often
- Fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Losing weight without trying
- Often there are no symptoms.

If you have one or more risk factors or any of these symptoms, see your doctor right away.

### Statistics:

- Almost 25,000 adults in the U.P. have diabetes. About one third are undiagnosed.
- There are 55,000 people with pre-diabetes in the U.P.
- In 2004, diabetes was the 6th leading cause of death among Michigan residents.

### Complications:

- Risk of stroke
- Risk of blindness
- Kidney disease
- Amputations
- Dental disease
- Pregnancy complications
- Nervous system disease

Diabetes has no cure. It is progressive and often fatal. The medical complications caused by diabetes can attack every major organ.

### Why is Family History Important?

Diabetes tends to run in families. A person with a family history of diabetes is 2-4 times as likely to develop diabetes as someone without a family history. Your family's ancestry is also important. African American, Hispanic, and Native American families have a higher risk of diabetes.

### Take the risk test:

(check each one that applies)

- Are you 45 years of age or older?
- Do you have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes?
- Are you Native American, Hispanic or African-American.
- Are you overweight?
- Do you get too little physical activity?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have high cholesterol?
- Did you have a baby that weighed 9 pounds or more at birth?

If you checked more than one, ACT NOW!

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Diabetes is **EASILY PREVENTABLE AND MANAGED** through lifestyle changes, medication and consistent medical care.

### What Can You Do?

KNOW your family history. Talk to your relatives and find out if anyone has had diabetes. Even though you can't change your family history, there are steps you can take that may prevent or delay the onset of disease.

If you have a family history of diabetes:

- Tell your health care provider
- Ask what screenings are recommended, then be sure to get them done
- Maintain a healthy weight – if you are overweight or obese, losing just 5-7% of your body weight decreases your risk of diabetes by more than 50%!
- Get more physical activity
- Have regular doctor visits
- Choose a healthy diet – with at least 2½ cups of brightly colored vegetables and 2 cups of fruit a day

Diabetes cannot always be prevented, but if detected early, there are many new and effective treatments. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, share your health history with family members. Encourage them to follow through with recommended screenings and make healthy lifestyle choices to reduce their risk of diabetes.

For more information, go to [www.diabetesinmichigan.org](http://www.diabetesinmichigan.org)

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## COMING NEXT WEEK: No Child Should Die From Diabetes

This is the first installment in a 4-part weekly series about Diabetes, brought to you by The Mining Journal and these sponsors:

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