

DIABETES AND THE ADDICTED WOMAN

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Diabetes is a complex and as-of-yet incurable disease that affects approximately 29.1 million people in the U.S. alone, an alarming rise from the 2012 figures of 16 million people afflicted. Diabetes is also known as the 'silent killer', because one out of four people who

have diabetes don't know it. There are two types of diabetes—Diabetes 1, an auto-immune disease with strong genetic factors that generally affects people under the age of 40 and most typically strikes in childhood or adolescence; and Diabetes 2, which accounts for at least 90 percent of all the cases and develops in a completely different way—this is the type of diabetes that we will discuss in this article, because it occurs most frequently in people over 40, is more of a progressive disease and is made worse by bad habits, such as smoking, obesity, and excessive consumption of alcohol.



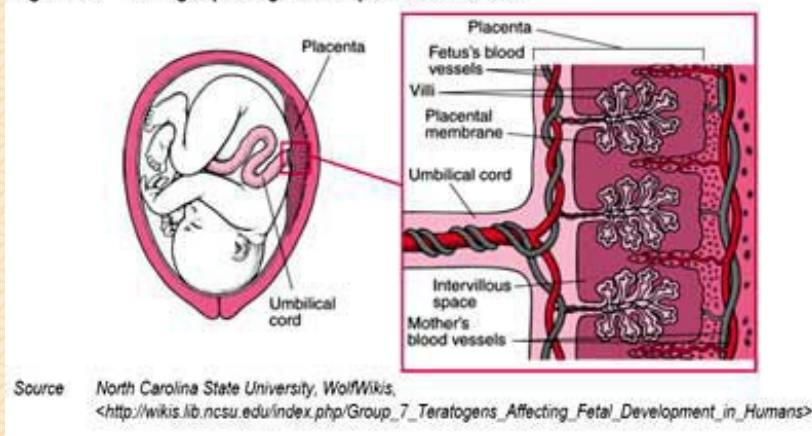
Diabetes 2 generally begins with insulin resistance, a condition where the affected person's body stops functioning properly in response to the release of the hormone insulin. Insulin is the primary hormone which regulates blood sugar (glucose) levels. If discovered before much damage is done, Diabetes 2 is a disease that can be somewhat manageable through changes in life habits and supplemental insulin delivered as a pill or as an injection. But when the affected person doesn't know they've progressed into diabetes, or if they do know but are in the throes of alcohol or other addictions that lead the person to stop taking proper care of herself, Diabetes 2 becomes extremely detrimental to the general health of the body. And younger people with Diabetes 1 can be severely adversely affected by not managing their disease properly, which can lead to a diabetic

coma or premature death from alcohol-induced hypoglycemia. Alcohol-induced hypoglycemia can also occur in non-diabetics. It is a condition caused by excessive alcohol consumption in a fasting state, or binge drinking.

Diabetes 2 is a chronic, progressive disease that occurs when the insulin resistance progresses to the point where the person's body cannot produce enough insulin to regulate blood glucose, which leads to many secondary problems—kidney failure, blindness, loss of feeling in the arms and legs, which can progress to gangrene of the digits or the limbs and result in amputation, and heart disease and stroke. Adults with diabetes have a 50% higher death rate than people without it. And the yearly medical costs and lost wages in the U.S. for treating diabetes and associated conditions topped \$245 billion dollars in the last year—medical costs are twice as high for diabetics than in non-diabetics.



Figure 2.2 Teratogen passing from the placenta to the fetus

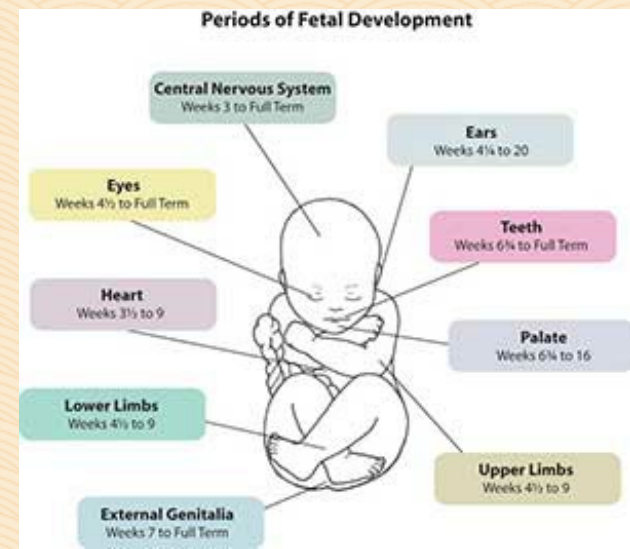


Even light drinking can worsen diabetic nerve damage; it can make managing your blood glucose levels much more difficult to do. Alcoholics with diabetes die at a 3x higher rate than alcoholics without diabetes. And a pregnant diabetic woman who drinks, even socially, can cause risks for her baby and her own health. There are no safe levels of alcohol for a pregnant woman and her baby. It is vitally important to control diabetes before, during and after pregnancy, thus lowering the risks of miscarriages and birth defects in the baby, or high blood pressure in the woman that can lead to a condition called preeclampsia. If blood glucose levels aren't properly controlled during pregnancy, the

baby may develop defects to the heart, spine and kidneys. Often, babies born to diabetic women who have difficulty in controlling their blood sugar are born very large, which can mean a difficult delivery. Or the baby may be born unusually small, be still born or the baby itself may develop extremely low blood sugar levels after birth (hypoglycemia).

For your sake and for the sake of your unborn baby, please don't drink or use illicit drugs during pregnancy. If you are struggling,

remember, we at Magnolia Women's Recovery Program care, and are here to help!
 If you wish to learn more about these disorders, please watch the videos posted below,
 or download any of the following printable PDFs:
 If you have difficulty downloading any of the PDFs below, please update your Adobe
 Reader



Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines
 Communicating Alcohol-Related Health Risks

This document was developed for social health-care providers to discuss with their clients the risks of alcohol consumption associated with various levels of alcohol consumption.

Table 1: Percentage Abstinence Rates for Health and Substance Dependence Deaths (U.S. Adults)

Age of those at risk	Percentage of those at risk who are abstinent	Percentage of those at risk who are abstinent	Percentage of those at risk who are abstinent	Percentage of those at risk who are abstinent
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Male	12.5%	15.5%	18.5%	21.5%
Female	10.5%	13.5%	16.5%	19.5%
Male	11.5%	14.5%	17.5%	20.5%
Female	9.5%	12.5%	15.5%	18.5%
Male	13.5%	16.5%	19.5%	22.5%
Female	11.5%	14.5%	17.5%	20.5%
Male	12.5%	15.5%	18.5%	21.5%
Female	10.5%	13.5%	16.5%	19.5%

Consequences of Alcohol Use in Diabetics

No safe type.
 No safe time.
 No safe amount.

Help give your baby a healthy start!
 Have an alcohol-free pregnancy.

www.healthunit.org

ndss
 National Diabetes Service Strategy

Gestational Diabetes
 Caring for yourself and your baby

If you are having trouble stopping drinking or using drugs, or would like more information, please contact us, your doctor, or use the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator.

Sources:

http://www.onhealth.com/pregnancy_planning/page4.htm

<http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/PageFiles/1615/gestational%20diabetes%20booklet%20FINAL.pdf>