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Dear Kara,

Diabetes is one of the most misunderstood diseases. Unless you have it or know someone who does, the disease is bewildering. What causes it? Why do some people have it and others don't? Can it be cured?

According to <u>Medical News Today</u>, one in ten Americans have diabetes. A myriad of myths surrounds the disease, causing it to have even more stigma than necessary. We'll tackle the top five.

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1. Eating too much sugar causes diabetes

Look up the top myths about diabetes and "eating sugar causes diabetes" or "people with diabetes can never eat sugar," are always at the top. Sugar, in and of itself, does not cause diabetes. Eating too much sugar can lead to being overweight which increases the risk of getting the disease. Taking better care of diet, exercise, and stress lowers the risk for diabetes.

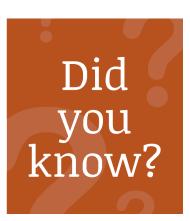


2. Diabetes only affects overweight people

Being overweight or obese are risk factors for becoming diabetic, but people of any weight can have the disease. In fact, around 20% of people with type 2 diabetes are of normal weight or even underweight. Factors that contribute to getting diabetes include how much physical exercise a person gets, family history, ethnicity, and age.

3. Diabetics always become blind or lose limbs

Diabetes has some very serious ramifications. For instance, having diabetes practically doubles your chance of having a heart attack. Sadly, blindness and amputations can also be outcomes, but they aren't inevitable. When diabetics control their blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, weight, activity levels, and smoking, they are less likely to have serious complications.



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4. People with diabetes shouldn't drive

Many of the myths around diabetes involve a lot of "shouldn'ts." Diabetics shouldn't play sports, shouldn't eat carbs, and shouldn't drive. Hypoglycemia is the reason many people feel diabetics shouldn't do these things. It can result in shakiness or even unconsciousness.

Hypoglycemia is a result of a person's blood sugar (glucose) level dropping lower than normal. It's important to know it's preventable. For diabetics, carefully monitoring blood sugar levels before driving and sticking to a healthy routine helps every diabetic driver stay safe.

5. Diabetes isn't that serious of a disease

Although no one is certain why some people develop diabetes and others don't, everyone regards diabetes as a serious disease. In fact, more Americans die from diabetes every year than from AIDS and breast cancer combined.

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You can help dispel the myths

Myths about diabetes only add to the stigma diabetics feel. Assure your diabetic customers you understand the seriousness of the disease and let them know they're not alone in maintaining a better quality of life.

Your independent pharmacy needs to be fully stocked and ready with the test strips, syringes, socks, and other supplies that help them manage their diabetes. They need to know you care.

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> *"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."* Romans 12:12





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