



7 Diabetes Myths and Facts

1.2 million people are affected by diabetes in Quebec

Debunk diabetes myths by learning from trusted sources of information.

Diabetes Québec is the authority on diabetes in Quebec.

Questions about diabetes?

InfoDiabetes Service

514-259-3422

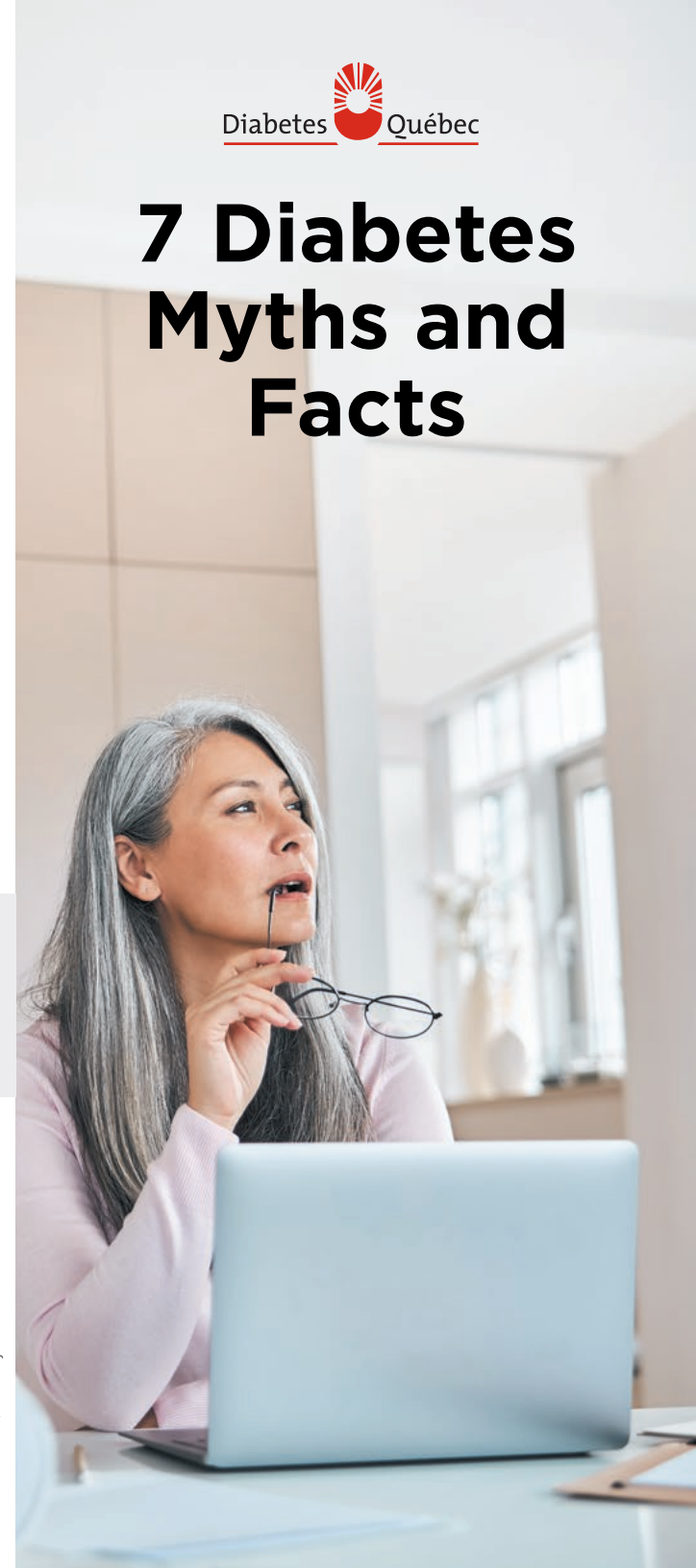
1-800-361-3504

infodiabete@diabete.qc.ca

Diabetes School



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1. **Diabetes is a disease of the elderly and the overweight.**

False. Age and excess weight, especially around the abdomen, are risk factors for **type 2 diabetes**. However, they are not the only ones. Young and thin individuals may also be at risk of developing diabetes.

2. **Many of my family members have diabetes. It's in my genes. There's nothing I can do to prevent it.**

True and False. Heredity is a risk factor for diabetes. However, it is possible to prevent or delay the onset of **type 2 diabetes** by adopting healthy lifestyle habits. This is not the case for **type 1 diabetes**, which is an autoimmune disease.



3. **I have a sweet tooth, so I am at risk of developing diabetes later!**

False. Eating a particular type of food, whether sweet or fatty, does not cause diabetes. On the other hand, continuing to eat after you are no longer hungry on a regular basis can lead to weight gain. Being overweight is a risk factor for developing **type 2 diabetes**.

4. **When you have diabetes, you must cut out all sugars from your diet.**

False. Sugars, as well as starches and fibre, are part of the large family of carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy. You should not eliminate them, but rather pay special attention to the quantity and quality of the carbohydrates you eat and make sure to spread them out over the course of the day.

To learn more, consult the brochure *A closer look: Diet for people living with diabetes* published by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec.

5. **Honey, maple syrup and raw sugar are not better choices than white sugar.**

True. Whether or not they come from natural sources, all sugars raise a person's glycemia, the concentration of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Even though they may contain nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals or antioxidants, the amounts consumed are so small that their health impact is minimal.

6. **I feel great. I have no symptoms. I can't possibly be diabetic!**

False. Diabetes is a sneaky disease that can set in without a person feeling anything at all. However, the diabetes may already have begun causing damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart and blood vessels. It is therefore important to see a doctor regularly and have the recommended screening tests.

7. **My doctor told me I needed to start taking insulin. This is a sign that I have failed and that my diabetes is more serious.**

False. **Type 2 diabetes** is a disease that progresses over time. Consequently, it is normal that the treatment will require adjustments that sometimes involve taking insulin. This does not mean that the diabetes is more "serious" or that the person has failed to adopt healthy lifestyle habits. Insulin is simply a new treatment option to help manage blood sugar levels.

