Diabetes Can Shorten Life Span by Six Years

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Diabetes can shorten a person's life span by six years, according to a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* and reported by Fox News Latino.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States, affecting 26 million Americans, with Latinos making up a huge portion of that number. The rate of diabetes among Latinos is almost double that of non-Latino whites, and it affects 26 percent of Puerto Ricans and 24 percent of Mexican Americans older than 45.

For the study, researchers analyzed the medical information of 820,900 people from almost 100 studies done mostly in Europe and North America. Participants were followed for 13.5 years, during which there were more than 120,000 deaths.

After taking into account risk factors that could influence study results, such as age, gender, smoking and weight, researchers found that diabetics older than 50 died about six years earlier than adults without the disease (by the way, these diabetics did not have heart disease). Researchers also found that diabetics had double the risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke and had a 25 percent higher risk of dying from cancer. Overall, they were also more likely to die from a variety of other illnesses.

"It's quite a wide sweep of conditions," said lead author John Danesh, a professor at Cambridge University in England. While most people already link diabetes with heart problems, he said, diabetes "appears to be associated with a much broader range of health implications than previously suspected."

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects the body's ability to produce or use insulin, a hormone that helps transport blood sugar into cells. While there is no cure for diabetes, it can be managed and prevented through diet and lifestyle changes.

Click here to learn everything you need to do to lower your risk and live a healthy, diabetes-free life, with advice from Athena Philis-Tsimikas, MD, corporate vice president at Scripps Health and chief medical officer of the Scripps Whittier Diabetes Institute in La Jolla, California.

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