



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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## **MAKE HEALTHY CHANGES FOR AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH**

BALTIMORE, November 15, 2019 — In honor of American Diabetes Month, MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, wants to use this month to raise awareness about diabetes risk factors and encourage people to make healthy changes. MedChi has worked closely with their affiliate, Sugar Free Kids Maryland, which is a statewide coalition that was established in 2014 and has been the state's leading voice in the fight against childhood obesity and teenage diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. Most of the food you eat is broken down into sugar and released into your bloodstream. Your pancreas makes a hormone called insulin. If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it makes as well as it should.

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. One in 10 Americans have diabetes — that's more than 30 million people. Another 84 million adults in the United States are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes; your age, weight, and other factors, give you a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The good news is that making healthy changes can greatly lower your risk of developing diabetes.

- Avoid concentrated sweets and sugary beverages such as regular soda, juice and sport drinks; water and 100% fruit juices are great alternatives.
- Watch your weight by eating healthy and doing more physical activity. Making small changes like taking the stairs instead of the elevator gives you extra physical activity which can help control your weight. The more fatty tissue someone has, the more resistant your cells become to insulin.
- Get regular check-ups with your physician that include getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked. People with a low level of cholesterol or too high a level of triglycerides are at greater risk for developing diabetes so it is important to know your levels.

“Sugary drinks are a key contributor to several chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes,” said Shawn McIntosh, Executive Director of Sugar Free Kids Maryland. “Helping children and families of our state choose healthier drinking options such as water and milk goes a long way to preventing these problems and helping them live long, healthy lives.”

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).