



Nearly 8.5% of the world population now live with diabetes, but in Europe nearly 10.3% of European men and 9.6% of European women over 25 years are living with the disease. That amounts to nearly 60 million people. In the Nordic countries, the number of people living with diabetes is slightly lower. On average, 6.8% of the population suffer from diabetes.

In Europe diabetes caused over 477.715 deaths in 2017, and over 139 million euro was spent on treating the disease according to [International Diabetes Federations annual report](#) .

Diabetes is a chronic disease affecting that occurs either then the pancreas does not produce enough of the hormone insulin, or when the body doesn't manage to effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin regulates the blood sugar, and uncontrolled diabetes can harm many of the body's systems and organs.

The disease can damage the heart, kidneys, nerves and blood vessels over time and lead to blindness and visual impairment if not managed correctly. Half of the diabetes patients die of cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), and kidney failure are responsible for 10-20% of the deaths among diabetes patients.

Healthy diets with fruits, vegetables and low intake of saturated fats and refined carbohydrates lower the risk for obesity and diabetes. Only 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days a week also have positive effects on health and lowers the risk of getting the disease. Overweight and obesity accounts for 65-80% of new cases of type 2 diabetes [according to the WHO](#) .

Although Nordic countries are known for enjoying outdoor activities and having active lifestyles, there are room for improvement. According to WHO, 28,1% of the Nordics are physically

inactive on average, while 59,8 % are overweight ([more info...](#)).

The UN created the World Diabetes Day as an annual day observance in 2007 to raise awareness of the health issue diabetes represents, promote and improve global health and encourage member states to take action to prevent the disease and help diabetes patients.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the number of deaths caused by diabetes will double between 2005 and 2030. Today, 3.4 million people worldwide die from high blood glucose levels every year, and diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in the world. Almost 80% of the deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and almost half are people aged under 70 years.