

# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay

## Adult Diabetes

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) states that "the current state of [Indigenous] health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian governmental policies, including residential schools".<sup>1</sup> Diabetes and access to diabetes care has been identified as a priority in Thunder Bay. Compared to the general population, rates of diabetes has been demonstrated to be between 2 to 3 times higher among Indigenous peoples and is disproportionately higher among Indigenous children and pregnant women and often accompanied with other co-morbidities and complications.<sup>2</sup> High rates of chronic health conditions has been linked to a disproportionate burden of poverty, adverse living conditions, and racism.<sup>3,4</sup> This may also be linked to poor access to primary and preventative care services.

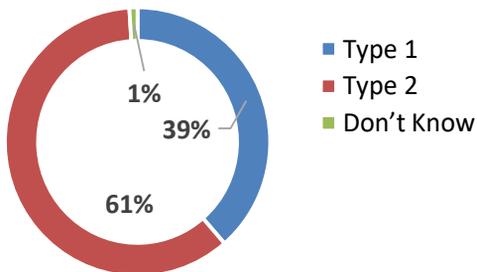
### 15%\* of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay

were diagnosed with **diabetes or pre-diabetes** by their healthcare provider.

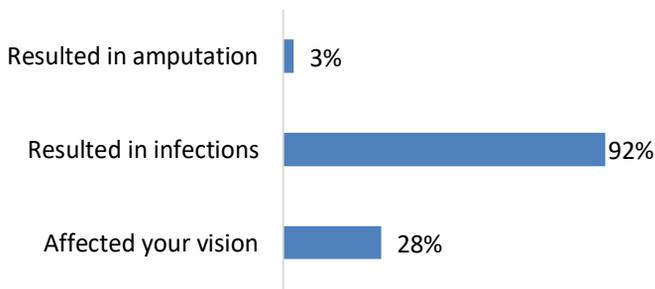
Higher than the diabetes rate (7%) of the **general adult population in Ontario**.<sup>5</sup>

\*Diabetes prevalence may be underestimated due to access barriers to health care and diabetes screening

#### Type of Diabetes



#### Has your diabetes...

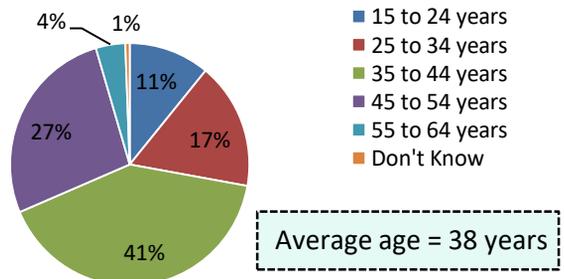


**1 in 3** Indigenous adults with pre-diabetes/diabetes in Thunder Bay was **food insecure**.

Food insecurity is more common for Indigenous adults **with diabetes** compared to those without diabetes.

Just over **1 in 4** Indigenous adults without pre-diabetes/diabetes **was food insecure**.

#### Age of Diabetes Diagnosis



**66%** of Indigenous adults with diabetes **used a dietician** to help manage their diabetes.

**26%** of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay reported experiencing difficulties getting the routine or ongoing care needed for their diabetes or pre-diabetes.



**Almost 1 in 3** of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay did not receive adequate supports and resources for managing their diabetes, pre-diabetes, glucose intolerance.

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## Adult Chronic Health Conditions

### Tests for Diabetes Care

**Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay diagnosed with diabetes in the past 12 months...**

**77%** have been tested for haemoglobin “A1C”.

**42%** have had their feet checked for sores or irritations.

**78%** have had their urine tested for protein.

**82%** have had an eye exam where pupils of eyes were dilated.

**Clinical practice guidelines<sup>6</sup> indicate that...**

- ✓ Haemoglobin “A1C” should be tested in diabetic individuals (Type 1 and 2) approximately every 3 months
- ✓ Feet should be checked at least once a year
- ✓ Urine tests should be conducted at least once a year
- ✓ Eye exams should be conducted:
  - Type 1 diabetes - At least once a year
  - Type 2 diabetes - Every 1-2 years

### Policy Implications

**TRC Call to Action 18:** We call upon the federal government, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to acknowledge that the current state of Indigenous health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Indigenous peoples as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

**TRC Call to Action 19:** We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as maternal health, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases and the availability of appropriate health services.

**TRC Call to Action 21<sup>1</sup>:** We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Indigenous healing centres to address physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms.

**MMIWG Report Calls to Justice 3.2:<sup>7</sup>** We call upon all governments to provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate, and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

**Additional Recommendations:** City of Thunder Bay, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous Peoples and local organizations to:

- Address barriers in accessing programs and services, including culturally relevant public health and health promotion programs to address modifiable diabetes risk factors, including improved access to nutritious foods and environments for physical activity.
- Provide funding for longitudinal research to better understand risk factors of diabetes among the Indigenous communities.

#### Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Nation aged 15 years and older living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay

#### Sources

1. Truth and Reconciliation Canada (2015); 2. Pelletier et al. (2012); 3. Paradies (2006); 4. Allan & Smylie (2015); 5. Statistics Canada (2018); 6. Diabetes Canada (2017); 7. MMIWG Calls to Justice (2019)

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods Factsheet)

### Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people



WELL LIVING HOUSE



ANISHNAWBE  
**MUSHKIKI**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS



Ontario  
Ministry of  
HEALTH AND  
LONG-TERM CARE

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# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

## Adult Chronic Conditions Health Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada.

Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>Have you been told by a healthcare provider that you have pre-diabetes, glucose intolerance or diabetes?</b>	
Yes	14.90% (10.30, 19.50)
No	84.20% (70.30, 89.00)
Don't know	1.00% (0.00, 2.70)
<b>Had diabetes by food security</b>	
Always or most of the time you and others had enough of the kinds of food you wanted to eat	66.90% (52.00, 81.80)
Sometimes or often you or others did not have enough to eat	33.10% (18.20, 48.00)
<b>Did not have diabetes by food security</b>	
Always or most of the time you and others had enough of the kinds of food you wanted to eat	72.50% (65.80, 79.20)
Sometimes or often you or others did not have enough to eat	27.10% (20.40, 33.80)
<b>Type of Diabetes</b>	
Type 1	38.50% (19.10, 58.00)
Type 2	60.80% (41.10, 80.40)
Don't Know	0.70% (0.00, 2.20)
<b>How old were you where you were first diagnosed with diabetes</b>	
15-24 years	11.00% (0.00, 23.00)
25-34 years	16.50% (0.00, 33.80)
35-44 years	41.50% (17.90, 65.10)
45-54 years	26.90% (9.20, 44.60)
55- 64 years	35.30% (0.70, 63.70)
<b>In the past 12 months, has a health care professional tested you for hemoglobin A1C?</b>	
Yes	76.70% (64.10, 89.40)
No	22.90% (10.10, 35.60)
Don't Know	0.40% (0.00, 0.80)
<b>In the past 12 months, has a healthcare professional tested your urine for protein (i.e. microalbumin)</b>	
Yes	77.60% (65.20, 90.00)
No	18.60% (7.10, 30.18)
Don't Know	3.80% (0.00, 8.70)



# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

## Adult Chronic Health Conditions Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>Have you ever had an eye exam where the pupils of your eyes were dilated</b>	
Yes	82.30% (69.10, 95.50)
No	17.70% (4.50, 30.90)
<b>When was the last time?</b>	
Less than one month ago	4.90% (0.10, 9.80)
1 month to less than 1 month ago	59.70% (42.50, 76.90)
1 years to less than 2 years ago	19.30% (7.20, 31.40)
2 or more years ago	16.00% (1.90, 30.10)
<b>In the past 12 months, have you used any of the following services or programs to help manage your pre-diabetes or diabetes?</b>	
Diabetes clinic or care program through a hospital	2.50% (0.00, 5.20)
Medical doctor/nurse practitioner	0.40% (0.00, 1.20)
Diabetes nurse	2.50% (0.40, 4.60)
Community support program	1.80% (0.60, 3.10)
Homecare/outreach nurse	0.00% (0.00, 0.00)
Homecare worker	0.00% (0.00, 0.00)
Foot clinic	4.20% (1.60, 6.90)
Diabetes education program	4.80% (2.10, 7.60)
Programs offered through Ontario Native Women's Association – Aboriginal Diabetes Education Awareness	0.00% (0.00, 0.00)
Healthy cooking skills/ cooking classes	1.70% (0.50, 2.90)
Dietician	65.80% (33.70, 97.90)
Traditional healer	1.60% (0.00, 3.70)
Stress management programs	1.80% (0.50, 3.10)
Smoking cessation programs	0.00% (0.00, 0.10)
Support groups	0.30% (0.00, 0.60)
Self-help groups	0.20% (0.00, 0.20)
Walking programs	3.20% (0.90, 5.60)
Did not use any services or programs to help manage diabetes	0.70% (0.00, 1.90)
Other	1.40% (0.00, 2.80)
<b>Has your diabetes...</b>	
Affected your vision (e.g. retinopathy)	27.50% (7.00, 48.00)
Resulted in infections	91.50% (79.00, 1.00)
Resulted in amputation	3.40% (0.00, 14.00)
<b>In the past 12 months, has a healthcare professional checked your feet for any sores or irritations?</b>	
Yes	42.40% (19.80, 65.10)
No	57.60% (34.90, 80.30)



# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

## Adult Chronic Health Conditions Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>In the past 12 months, did you ever experience any difficulties getting the routine or ongoing care you needed for your diabetes/ prediabetes?</b>	
Yes	26.40% (11.60, 41.20)
No	73.60% (58.80, 88.40)
<b>Have you received adequate supports and resources for managing your diabetes/ prediabetes/ glucose intolerance?</b>	
Yes	67.80% (53.27, 82.30)
No	32.22% (17.70, 46.70)
<b>Has a health care professional ever screened you for diabetes using fasting plasma glucose or haemoglobin "A-one-C"?</b>	
Yes	29.50% (22.20, 36.70)
No	65.60% (58.40, 72.80)
Don't know	4.90% (2.50, 7.30)
<b>If yes, was it...</b>	
Less than six months ago	22.60% (12.70, 32.50)
6 months to less than 12 months ago	24.40% (13.70, 35.10)
1 year to less than 3 years ago	19.20% (10.40, 28.00)
3 or more years ago	28.00% (17.10, 38.90)
Don't know	5.90% (0.20, 11.50)

