

# Managing Diabetes and Dementia within the Elderly Community

LCDR Whitney Moseley, BSN, RN

Health Promotion Disease Prevention Coordinator

Community Health Representative (CHR) Consultant

Indian Health Service, Oklahoma City Area Office



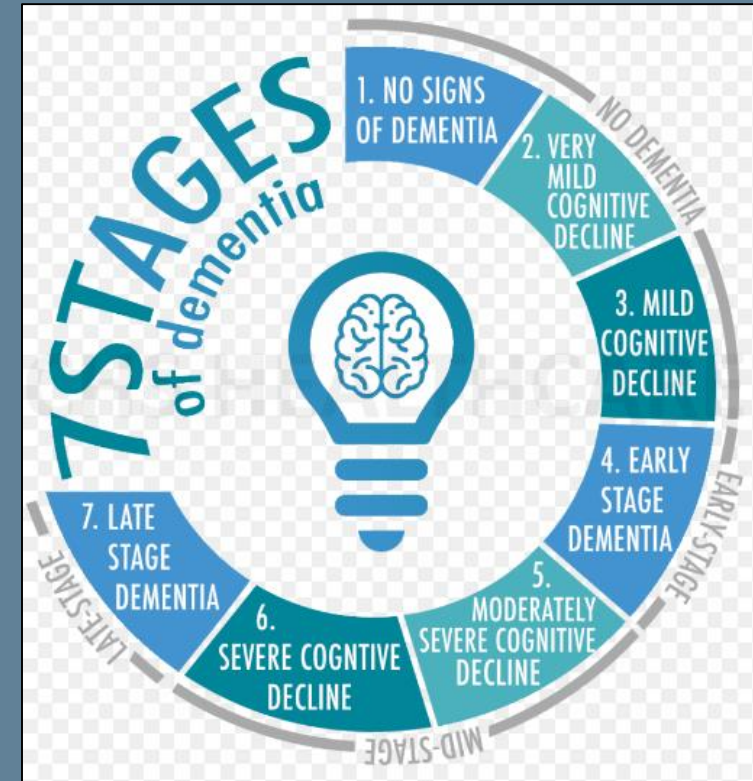
# Diabetes and Dementia Defined

- **Diabetes**

- Chronic condition in which the glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high
- The body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use it as it should.
  - When there isn't enough insulin or the body stops responding to insulin, too much blood sugar stays in your blood.

- **Dementia**

- Progressive, irreversible condition of the brain that affects mental function



<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>

<https://alzheimer.ca/en/about-dementia/how-can-i-prevent-dementia/diabetes>

<https://www.alz.org/media/documents/alzheimers-dementia-diabetes-cognitive-decline-ts.pdf>

# Reducing the Risk of Dementia amongst Diabetics



- 4 Health Behaviors
  - Eat Better
  - Be More Active
  - Quit Tobacco
  - Get Healthy Sleep
- 4 Health Factors
  - Manage Weight
  - Control Cholesterol
  - Manage Blood Sugar
  - Manage Blood Pressure

# Link between Diabetes and Dementia

## Issues for elders with diabetes who develop dementia

- Forgetting to take medications regularly
- Forgetting that they have already taken meds
  - Risk of double dosing
- Forgetting how to administer medications
- Inability to interpret blood sugar results
- Forgetting to eat
  - Risk for low blood sugar
- Forgetting that they've already eaten
  - Risk for high blood sugar
- Forgetting to drink
  - Risk for dehydration

## Issues for elders with dementia who develop diabetes

- Frequent need to pass urine
  - More issues with incontinence
- Increased risk for falls
  - More frequent trips to the bathroom
- Increased confusion due to high blood sugar levels
  - Leading to additional fatigue and dehydration
- Potential distress if change in diet
- Distress, wandering, rocking, crying
  - Often related to pain and confusion or difficult finding the words
- Increased risk of infection

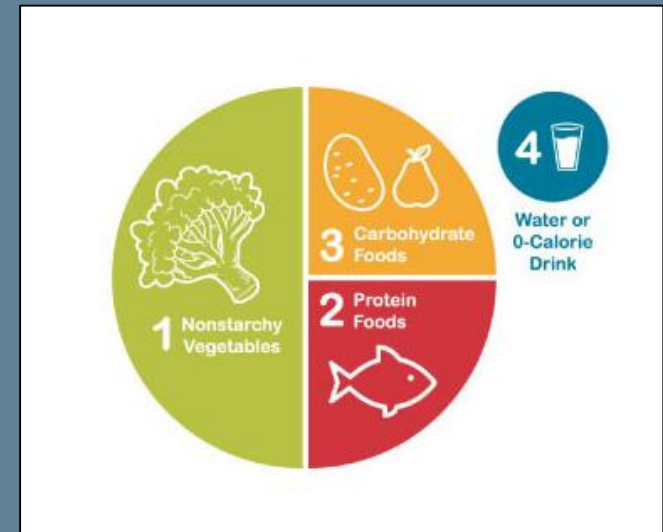
# Managing Diabetes and Dementia

- Self-care tasks become caregiver tasks
  - Monitoring blood sugars
  - Managing blood sugars
  - Eating healthy meals
  - Engaging in physical activity
  - Taking medication as directed
  - Performing proper hygiene
    - Foot
    - Dental
  - Managing medical appointments

# Nutrition Concerns with Dementia

- **Communication**
  - Difficulty pronouncing words or finding the right words
- **Memory Problems**
  - Forgetting to eat or forgetting that one has already eaten
- **Agnosia**
  - Inability to recognize food, cutlery, people...
- **Dysphasia**
  - Inability to express hunger or feeling of low blood sugar
- **Dysphagia**
  - Difficulty chewing and swallowing
- **Executive Dysfunction**
  - Affects the ability to plan and/or prepare food and/or drink

## American Diabetes Association Diabetes Plate Method





# What can you as a caregiver do?

- Promote and support **self-care**
- Assist with **physical activity**
- Monitor **nutrition**
- Monitor **blood sugar**
- Manage **illness**



# What about for yourself as a caregiver?

## Take Care of Yourself as a Caregiver



Activities like these can lower your stress, boost your mood, and help make you a better caregiver, too.

Learn more about caregiving at [www.nia.nih.gov/caregiving](http://www.nia.nih.gov/caregiving).





# Thank you!

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[Whitney.Moseley@ihs.gov](mailto:Whitney.Moseley@ihs.gov)

