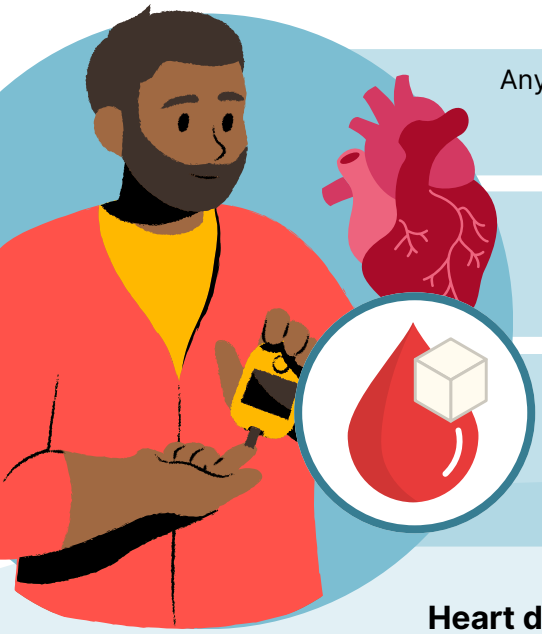
Diabetes and the Heart



WHO

Anyone can develop diabetes, but risk is higher in Black communities, and for people with a family history, obesity, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.

WHAT

The body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use it properly. As a result, blood sugar builds up in the blood, instead of being used for energy.

WHY

Over time, high blood sugar damages blood vessels and nerves, leading to:

- Heart disease and stroke
- Kidney problems
- Vision loss
- Nerve pain and poor circulation

Heart disease is the #1 cause of death for people living with diabetes.

WHEN

Screen early, especially if overweight, have high blood pressure, or family history.

Early 20s

Recheck if your blood sugar is elevated or you're at higher risk.

Yearly / 6 months

Early testing saves lives — don't wait for symptoms!

PREVENTION (Lifestyle Medicine)

- Choose **water** instead of sugary drinks.
- Follow the **plate method: ½ vegetables, ¼ protein, ¼ whole grains.**
- Be **active daily** — walking, dancing, or playing sports.
- Get enough **sleep** and manage stress.
- Avoid **processed foods high in sugar** and fat.
- Maintain a **healthy weight** and don't skip checkups.



Tip

A1C = your blood sugar "report card." The lower it stays, the healthier your heart and blood vessels.

NUMBERS (How to Read Them)

HbA1c Measures average blood sugar over 3 months.

<5.7%	5.7–6.4%	6.5%+
Healthy range	Elevated	Diabetes

For more information & resources, visit Black Heart University (BHU)
— *powered by the **Black Heart Association***

BLACK HEART ASSOCIATION