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Diabetes is a condition where the human body struggles to regulate blood glucose due to insufficient insulin production or improper insulin use. It affects millions of people in America, spanning all age groups. According to the American Diabetes Association, 38.4 million Americans live with diabetes, with 1.2 million new diagnoses each year. The condition is notably prevalent among seniors, affecting 29.2% or 16.5 million adults over 65. Additionally, diabetes impacts 352,000 Americans under the age of 20.

National Diabetes Month offers an opportunity to increase awareness about diabetes. Communities across the country come together to spotlight the disease, share personal stories, and educate on diabetes prevention, detection, and management. There are two main types of diabetes:

- **Type One:** Also known as juvenile diabetes, type one diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce insulin because the body's immune system attacks the insulin-producing cells. This type of diabetes often develops in children, teens, and young adults.
- **Type Two:** The pancreas makes less insulin than it used to and the body becomes resistant to insulin. This is the most common kind of diabetes, affecting 90% of people with diabetes, and is typically seen more in older adults. The primary factors causing this are genes and lifestyle.

Although there are many causes of diabetes, individuals can take preventive steps to avoid the condition. Factors such as stress, weight gain, lack of physical activity, and poor sleep contribute to diabetes. Regular exercise, healthy eating, better sleep, and regular medical check-ups can help mitigate these risks.

My family has a history of diabetes, and I've seen many of my elders manage the symptoms and medical care that diabetes requires. Despite my father's parents and grandparents having diabetes, he fortunately does not suffer from the disease. He proactively addresses the potential

risk by exercising regularly, sleeping well, and eating healthily. My father is a role model for me and inspires me to take steps toward better health.

Raising awareness is the first step in preventing diabetes. Increased knowledge and awareness promote healthier lifestyles, significantly improving the lives of those living with the disease.