Diabetes Discourse

Volume 16, Issue 1 **November 2025**

Quarterly Newsletter of the Bovell Cancer Diabetes Foundation (BCDF)

This Free Newsletter is a Vital Resource for Diabetes Prevention and for anyone Living with Diabetes

Our Vision

- Enriching lives, one person at a time

Our Mission

- To enrich the lives of people living with or at risk for cancer and diabetes by providing financial resources, support, preventive and management education.

BCDF Activities Include:

- Modest grants to individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes to enhance their quality of life
- Prevention and management education, and small-group workshops
- Advocacy and referrals to resources for individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes
- Writing grant proposals and fundraising

BCDF relies on donations to carry out its mission. We are an incorporated, charitable Foundation in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. BCDF functions with volunteers only and no paid staff.

To contact us with comments, questions or articles, phone 868) 667-2576; WhatsApp 334.590.3073 or e-mail: bovellcancerdiabetesfoundation@gmail.com; http://www.bovellcancerdiabetesfoundation.org

Disclaimer: *This newsletter is meant to educate and inform. It is not to be used as medical advice. Please consult your doctor for medical advice.*

Inside This Issue

2025 Diabetes in the Limelight Jamboree

Dear Volunteers and Supporters,

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their time, enthusiasm, and commitment to the BCDF Diabetes in the Limelight Jamboree on 7th November 2025 as part of our World Diabetes Day campaign. Your generosity, positivity, and tireless efforts were instrumental in making the event such a meaningful and successful experience. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers (TRHA nurses, eye doctors, nutrition unit), the doctors and our main supporters: **Lesville Guest House, Blue Waters, Andy's Expert Tailoring**

We also thank the attendees, whose presence and participation brought the event to life and made it truly special. Together, we continue to make a real difference in our community.

With heartfelt appreciation,

BODs, BCDF & Committed Volunteers

JAMBOREE 2025 GALLERY

Nutrition Unit, Tobago Regional Health Authority

Zumca© Time with Jamboree Children

Regular physical activity helps children build strong bodies, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce their future risk of diabetes and cancer by supporting healthy growth, immunity, and lifelong habits.

Food Demonstration Booth

The Food Demonstration booth showcased simple, affordable, and healthy cooking techniques, engaging attendees with practical tips to support better nutrition and diabetes/disease prevention.

Stroke Prevention Booth

The Booth provided easy-to-understand education on blood pressure and recognizing the warning signs of stroke.

Chef Curtis brings healthy cooking to life with an engaging food demonstration at the Jamboree.

Volunteers Gale Quashie & Curtis/ Food Demo Booth


Eye Exam Booth (TRHA Eye Doctors)

Offered free vision screenings/education to attendees, helping to preserve eye health.


Nutrition Education Booth

Food models were used to make nutrition education interactive and easy to understand, helping attendees visualize healthy portion sizes and balanced meals.


Weight Clinic

Weight, height, waist circumference and BMI were measured to help attendees understand their weight status and its relation to diabetes prevention and management.


Essential screenings, including blood pressure, blood sugar, A1C, and cholesterol to reduce diabetes risk.

BCDF Mascot, Festus, King of the Woods

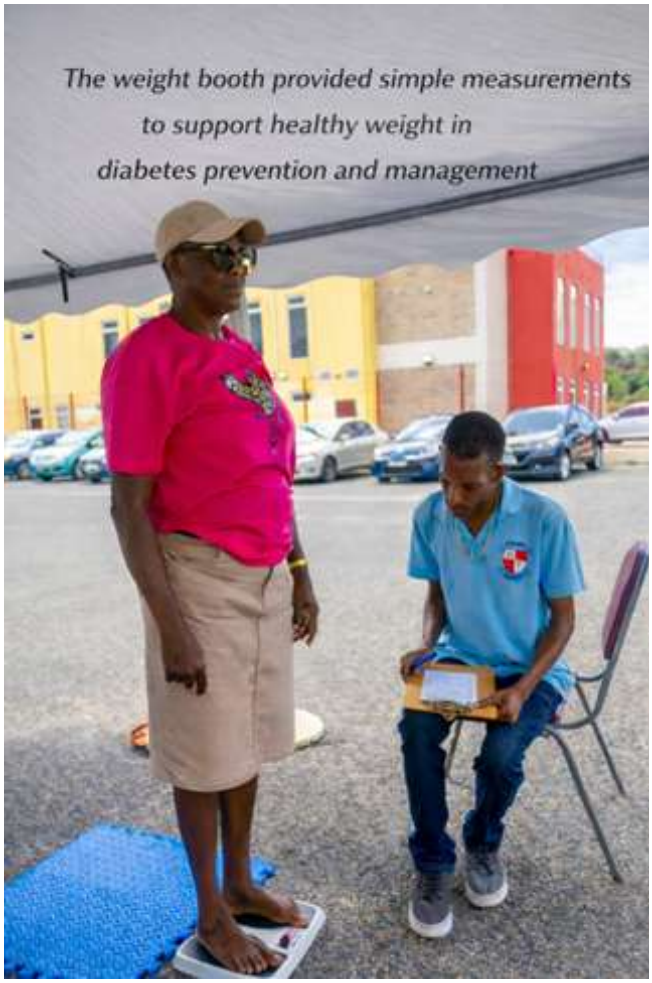
BCDF's beloved mascot, Festus, King of the Woods, brought energy, smiles, and powerful diabetes prevention messages to life in the Children's Booth.

Engaging storytelling at the Children's Booth captured young imaginations while sharing fun and age-appropriate messages about diabetes prevention. Through the stories and Festus, children learnt simple, preventive tips.

Rosetta brings stories to life, inspiring children with fun, interactive lessons that promote diabetes prevention, healthy habits and active minds.

Nurses Booth

The nurses provided essential health screenings, including blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol. Attendees received referrals to help them better prevent, manage and reduce diabetes risk. A1c was done by Scarborough Medical Lab.



Cholesterol testing results showed whether participants had normal or elevated cholesterol levels. Elevated cholesterol is a well-established risk factor for heart disease and stroke, which are common complications of diabetes. By revealing these levels, the testing underscored how managing cholesterol is an important part of overall diabetes risk reduction and management.

SOME FOOD PRESERVATIVES LINKED TO INCREASED CANCER AND DIABETES RISK

Consuming high amounts of some food preservatives may lead to moderate increases in cancer and type 2 diabetes risk.

News Published: January 13, 2026
Written by Alexander Beadle

Consuming higher levels of some food preservatives may be linked to moderate increases in cancer and type 2 diabetes risk, according to two new studies from researchers in France. The studies, published in The BMJ and Nature Communications, examined food questionnaire answers from more than 100,000 people recorded over multiple years. It investigated any associations between new cancer and type 2 diabetes diagnoses and the intake of 17 common food preservatives. However, both studies were observational and cannot establish causality. The observed links between some preservatives and these health conditions suggest a need for further study, and potentially the re-evaluation of some food additive regulations.

Food preservatives linked to increased cancer risk

The use of additives has become standard practice in the food industry. By using preservative additives, producers can extend the shelf-life of their foods, helping to protect against the growth of microorganisms and spoilage for longer. While food additives are regulated by governing bodies in America, Europe and other countries, recent scientific studies have suggested a mixture of positive and harmful effects depending on their dose.

However, there is a lack of epidemiological data detailing links between common preservatives and disease incidence. Published in The BMJ, this latest study used data from the NutriNet-Santé study, covering more than 105,000 individuals between the years 2009 and 2023, and evaluated their consumption of different preservatives against any new cancer diagnoses. Dietary intake was assessed during the study registration and then every six months, with each participant being asked to complete a 24-hour dietary record over 3 non-consecutive days. The records included brand-specific data, which allowed the researchers to estimate participants' consumption of different food preservatives. Health questionnaires and official medical and death records were used to track cancer cases. Across the study period, 4,226 of the enrolled participants received a cancer diagnosis.

Of the 58 preservatives identified in the analysis, 17 preservatives were consumed by at least 10% of participants and were thus chosen to be evaluated against cancer incidence. The researchers found that higher intakes of 6 out of the 17 preservatives were associated with higher incidences of breast and prostate cancers, as well as overall cancer incidence, compared with non-consumers or those with lower intakes. Sodium nitrite was associated with a 32% increased risk of prostate cancer, while potassium nitrate was associated with an increased risk of overall cancer (13%) and breast cancer (22%). Acetic acid was associated with a 12% increased risk of overall cancer. Total sorbates, total sulfites and total acetates were also associated with increases in overall cancer.

"From my perspective, the work stands out as it did not particularly focus on ultra-processed foods but took a broader view of dietary intake of food additives, using brand-specific information rather than a generalised assessment." Indeed, only about a third of the additive preservatives examined in this study were from ultra-processed foods," commented Prof. William Gallagher, a Professor of cancer biology at University College Dublin, in a statement given to the Science Media Centre in Ireland. Gallagher was not involved in the study.

"Of interest, while a substantial number of study participants took part (>100,000), nearly 80% of them were women, tended to be older, and ate less processed meat. This suggests a slight bias to the study, but it looks like they tried their best to control for this," Gallagher added. *"The conclusion that calls for future re-evaluation of the safety of these food additives, considering the balance between benefit and risk for food preservation, is warranted,"* Dr. Gavin Stewart, a reader in interdisciplinary evidence at Newcastle University, told the Science Media Centre. Stewart was also not involved in the research.

"However, any calls for changes in consumer behavior would be premature given the uncertainty surrounding analysis of multiple subgroups and the potential for false-positive errors," Stewart added.

"Even if future evidence can confidently demonstrate health benefits of avoiding preserved food, that may still be outweighed by the costs for some consumers" said Stewart.

12 of 17 preservatives linked to type 2 diabetes risk

The second paper, published in Nature Communications, used similar data from more than 108,000 individuals enrolled in the NutriNet-Santé study between 2009 and 2023 to evaluate associations between food preservatives and type 2 diabetes incidence. Over the study period, 1,131 cases of type 2 diabetes (T2D) were diagnosed. Researchers found that those who consumed the highest intake of preservatives had a 47% higher risk of developing T2D, compared to those who consumed the lowest levels. Broadly, non-antioxidant preservatives were associated with a 49% increase, while antioxidant additives were linked to a 40% higher risk.

"This is the first study in the world on the links between preservative additives and the incidence of type 2 diabetes," said senior study author Mathilde Touvier, Research Director at the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (Inserm) and the Principal Investigator of the NutriNet-Santé study, in a

statement. Although the results need to be confirmed, they are consistent with experimental data suggesting the harmful effects of several of these compounds," Touvier added.

Of the 17 preservatives studied individually, higher intakes of 12 were associated with an increased risk for T2D. Five of these — potassium sorbate, potassium metabisulfite, sodium nitrite, acetic acid, and sodium acetate — were also identified as increasing disease risk in the cancer study. "This work once again justifies the recommendations made by the National Nutrition and Health Programme to consumers to favor fresh, minimally processed foods and to limit unnecessary additives as much as possible," Touvier concluded.

References:

1. Hasenböhler A, Javaux G, Payen De La Garanderie M, et al. Intake of food additive preservatives and incidence of cancer: Results from the NutriNet-Santé prospective cohort. BMJ. 2026;392:e084917. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2025-084917
2. Hasenböhler A, Javaux G, Payen De La Garanderie M, et al. Associations between preservative food additives and type 2 diabetes incidence in the NutriNet-Santé prospective cohort. Nat Commun. 2026;16(1):11199. doi: 10.1038/s41467-025-67360-w

Two major types of preservatives

1. Antioxidant preservatives prevent foods from turning rancid or changing color by reducing the chance of fats combining with oxygen. On European food labels, antioxidant additives are typically assigned an E number ranging between E300 and E399. Common antioxidant preservatives include ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and sodium erythorbate.
2. Non-antioxidant preservatives slow food spoilage by preventing microbial growth or by slowing chemical reactions in food. These are typically assigned E numbers between E200 and E299, and include preservatives such as sodium nitrite, potassium nitrate, and acetic acid.

🧂 What Are Preservatives?

Preservatives are substances added to food to help it last longer.

They slow down spoilage caused by germs (bacteria, mold).

👉 *They help keep food from going bad too fast.*

⏳ Why Are Preservatives Used in Foods?

✅ To make food last longer

🛒 So food can stay fresh on shelves and at home

✅ To prevent food from spoiling

🦠 They slow the growth of germs that make food unsafe

✅ To reduce food waste

🚮 Less food is thrown away

✅ To help with transport and storage

🚚 Food can travel long distances without spoiling

Where Do We Find Preservatives?

- Bread
- Canned foods
- Packaged snacks
- Soft drinks and juices
- Processed meats

🌿 Important to Know

- Some preservatives are natural (salt, vinegar, sugar)
- Others are added chemicals
- Eating too many preserved foods is not healthy, especially for diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease

📌 Simple Take-Home Message

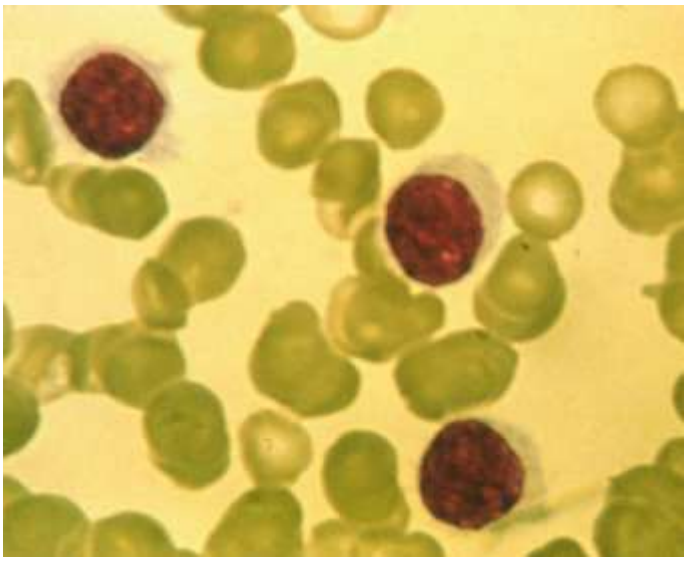
Preserved foods should be eaten less often.

Less healthy food choices such as: sausages, hot dogs, chips, packaged snacks, canned foods (long shelf life), soft drinks, sweetened juices, instant noodles and fast foods have more preservatives. Eating them often can increase risk of diabetes, stroke, and heart disease.

LET'S TALK CANCER WITH…

Dr. Liselle Bovell

Understanding Cancer



What is Cancer?

The body is made up of billions of tiny things called **cells**, and each has a job to make our bodies work and stay healthy. Cancer is more than just one disease – it is a group of diseases that happen when **bad cells** stop the good cells from doing their job. These **bad cells** can grow into a lump (**called a tumour**) and can spread to other parts of the body. There are many types of cancer, and it can develop anywhere in the body. There are many different kinds of cancer, but they all involve **bad or abnormal cells**.

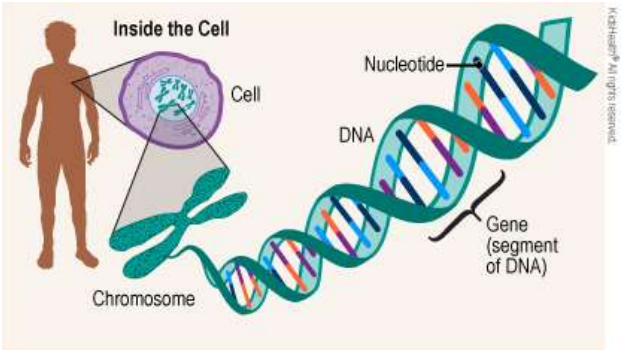
What makes something Cancer?

Genes are the tiny, invisible instructions inside your body that make you 'YOU'. They act as a blueprint, telling your body what color your eyes should be, how tall to grow, and even whether your hair is curly or straight. We inherit our genes from our parents, which is why we might have our mothers' eyes or our fathers' feet.

- Gene changes (mutations): Cancer cells have changes in their genes that make them bad or abnormal. Some of these gene changes may be passed down from our parents (inherited mutations), while others may happen later in life (acquired mutations).
- Uncontrolled cell growth: Most bad cells die off or are unable to reproduce. But cancer cells can keep growing and dividing to make more bad cells. Cancer cells can crowd out good cells.
- Tumour formation: Simply put, it is a lump in the body that should not be there. The lump may or may not be cancer. Not all cancer cells form tumours, and not all tumours are cancer.
- Cancer spread (metastasis): When the cancer cells have travelled to another part of the body.

What causes cancer?

Cancer starts when something goes wrong in the normal process of cells growing and dividing to make new cells. A cell's genes (pieces of DNA that tell the cell how to function) change and make the cell bad or abnormal. DNA is the genetic information inside the body's cells that helps make us who we are. It is the instructions for how to make the body, like the code to a video game or blueprints for a house. Most cells die if they become bad or abnormal, but some gene changes allow cells to survive, grow, and divide to make more bad or abnormal cells.



Gene changes that lead to cancer can have many possible causes. Lifestyle habits, genes you get from your parents, and being exposed to certain chemicals or radiation can all play a role. Many times, there is no clear cause, but we know the risk factors, and those which are modifiable.

Modified from: https://www.cancer.org/cancer/understanding-cancer/what-is-cancer.html & https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/cancer-information/for-family-and-friends/talking-to-kids-about-cancer/glossary-for-kids/

BCDF Yearly Schedule of Events

Follow Us to Participate

November 2025		
	Diabetes in the Limelight Jamboree	Event
	Complimentary Foot Care - *"So in Love with my Feet" Project*	
December 2025		
	Life of a Child Initiative – patterned after the International Diabetes Federation's program, this project meets the needs (testing strips, assistance and support for doctors' visits, monitoring and education) of a child with diabetes.	Event
	So in Love with My Feet Poster Competition Results & Ceremony	
January 2026		
	Life of a Child Initiative	Event
	First Quarter Funding	Event
	Diabetes Discourse (November Issue)	Writing
February 2026		
	So in Love with My Feet	Event
	Children & Teen Hangout	
	Second Quarter Funding	Event
	Diabetes Discourse	Writing
	First 6-Week Diabetes/Nutrition Module	Event
March 2026		
	Life of a Child Initiative	Event
	Children & Teen Hangout	Event
	6-Week Diabetes/Nutrition Module Continues	Event
April 2026		
	Second 6-Week Diabetes/Nutrition Module	
	So In Love with My Feet	Event
	Children & Teen Hangout	
May 2026		
	Small Group Workshops	Event
	Annual Breakfast Morning	
	Diabetes Discourse Newsletter	Writing
	So in Love with my Feet Project	Event

	Teachers' Workshop Children & Teen Hangout Third Quarter Funding	Event
June 2026		
	Life of a Child Initiative Small Group Workshops *"So in Love with my Feet" Project* Children & Teen Hangout	Event
July | August 2026		
	"So in Love with my Feet Project" BCDF Retreat/Professional Development Proposal Writing Diabetes Discourse Virtual Cancer Workshop Children & Teen Hangout	Event Event Writing Writing Event Event
September | October 2026		
	Primary School World Diabetes Day Poster Competition Video Monologue Contest Fourth Quarter Funding	Event
November 2026		
	Diabetes Discourse (Quarterly Newsletter) 18th Diabetes in the Limelight Jamboree (Roxborough, Tobago) Cooking Contest	Writing Event

Make a Donation to BCDF

Help us stamp out Diabetes