

Hip-Hop Star Dies of Diabetes-Related Complications

March 29, 2016

Rap legend Malik “Phife Dawg” Taylor of A Tribe Called Quest died last week of complications related to diabetes. Taylor, age 45, had been battling the condition for decades, [NBC News reports](#).

Taylor’s death shines a spotlight on the African-American community’s increased vulnerability to diabetes, a metabolic disease that affects how the body uses blood sugar. According to the latest stats from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, today, black adults are 80 percent more likely than whites to be diagnosed with the condition. In addition, African Americans are also twice as likely to die of the disease than whites.

Taylor, who had type 2 diabetes, founded A Tribe Called Quest along with his high school classmate Q-Tip in 1985. (Type 2 diabetes results when the body doesn’t produce enough of the hormone insulin to ferry glucose into the cells and sugar builds up in the blood.)

The rapper first went public about his condition in 1993 in the song “Oh My God,” in which he rapped, “When’s the last time you heard a funky diabetic?” And years later, in a 2011 documentary about the history of the group, Taylor remarked that an uncontrolled sweet tooth often aggravated his diabetes.

Doctors first diagnosed Taylor with diabetes in 1990 and put him on dialysis in 2000, which severely affected his ability to perform. By 2008, Taylor’s condition worsened, and he received a kidney transplant from his wife. Four years later, Taylor was reportedly back on the waiting list for another kidney, but he succumbed to diabetes-related complications on March 22, 2016.

Unchecked, diabetes can lead to considerable health issues, including blindness, limb amputation and kidney failure. Eating healthy, staying in shape, taking proper medication and regularly tracking blood glucose levels are the best ways to keep control of the metabolic condition.

For more tips on how to get and stay healthy with diabetes, [click here](#).

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