

HEALTH TIP FOR NOVEMBER 7, 2021 DIABETES AWARENESS

November is National Diabetes Month. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) diabetes is on the rise in the U.S. population as well as world- wide. 2020 statistics show that 34.2 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes with an estimated 7.3 million undiagnosed. Many don't know they have the disease. According to the National Institutes of Health, **African Americans** are twice more likely to develop diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.

Diabetes is a leading chronic health problem in this country. According to the American Diabetes Association, the vast majority of diabetes cases are type 2 which is often (but not always) tied to overweight or obesity.

Prediabetes: When blood sugar levels that are **higher than normal** but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. It is on the rise in both children and adults

Diabetes Type 1

Type 1 diabetes accounts for about 5-10% of diabetes. It was previously called "juvenile diabetes" because it is **usually diagnosed at an early age** but not always. For reasons unknown, the immune system destroys the insulin producing cells in the pancreas making it unable to produce insulin needed to control blood sugar. Individuals with type 1 diabetes **must receive** insulin by injections to control the level of glucose in the blood.

Type 2 diabetes or previously called "**adult onset**" **can no longer be called this due to the increase in the number of children with this condition.** Obesity or overweight is a major factor in developing type 2 diabetes. The fat in the muscles and liver cells blocks the entry of insulin that is needed to regulate glucose (sugar) levels. Type 2 Diabetes accounts for between 90% and 95% of diabetes.

Major risk factors for type 2 diabetes:

Obesity/overweight (risk factor for both type 1 and type 2)

Age (risk increases with age)

Family history of diabetes (parents or siblings with the disease)

Ethnicity (Blacks and Hispanics a higher incidence than whites)

Sedentary lifestyle; lack of exercise

Poor dietary habits (too many starchy foods, sweets, sweet sodas) and not enough vegetables and low sugar fruits in the diet, fast foods, "junk food"

Diagnosed -pre-diabetic based on blood glucose testing.

Symptom of diabetes: Diabetes symptoms develop due to excess or elevated blood sugar levels in the body. Some may experience few symptoms others may experience more. They include:

- Excessive thirst/frequent urination
- Fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Blurry vision
- Numbness/tingling in extremities/slow wound healing/ gum disease
- Frequent yeast infections
- Sudden drop in blood sugar

Left untreated; blood sugars become very high causing a condition called “**Ketoacidosis**”

Symptoms:

- Hot dry skin
- Blurred vision
- Rapid deep breathing
- Abdominal pain/vomiting
- Fruity odor to breath
- Drowsiness, mental confusion/difficulty waking up
- If untreated could lead to coma or death. **(call 911 immediately)**

When a person’s blood sugar drops too low it is called “**Hypoglycemia**”

Symptoms:

- Rapid pulse
- Nausea/hunger/tremors (if the person is **conscious** taking in sugar by mouth in some form will raise the glucose level and usually alleviate the symptoms)
- Cool sweaty skin
- Anxiety
- Weakness, dizziness, tingling lips
- Untreated could lead to **unconsciousness (emergency situation –911)**

Blood sugar levels:

- According to the Mayo Clinic: **Normal A1c is 5.7 or lower (A1c is the level of glucose in your blood for the past 3 months)**
- **A1c 5.7-6.4** is considered **pre-diabetic**. This means there is a higher risk for developing diabetes.
- **A1c of 6.5** on two occasions means you are **diabetic**
- A fasting **blood sugar level of 72-99** is considered normal after a minimum 8 hours of fasting
- A **fasting blood sugar level between 100-125** is considered pre-diabetic
- A **fasting blood sugar above 125** on two consecutive occasion is considered diabetes.

Diabetes tend to run in families. If you have a family history, it is important to get your blood sugar level tested with your regular exams and every 3 months if you are pre-diabetic.

Treatment:

Type 1 diabetes is treated by the administration of insulin, and dietary restrictions

Type 2 Diabetes, (depending on the level of the blood sugar and dietary compliance) **may be managed in the following ways**

- dietary restrictions and exercise may be sufficient if there is strict adherence to the regime established by the health care provider
- the administration of oral medication, dietary restrictions and exercise
- in cases where dietary restrictions and/ or oral medications are not effective; type 2 diabetics may be placed on insulin injections

Unfortunately, too many people diagnosed with diabetes fail to do the things prescribed to keep their blood sugar under control; and will develop many complications associated with diabetes.

Complications include:

- Excessively high blood sugars (ketoacidosis); or episodes of low blood sugars (hypoglycemia)
- Infections, gangrene of extremities, visual problems/blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, cardiovascular disease among others.
- Diabetes is a risk factor for many serious health problems and diseases. Poorly managed diabetes can lead to amputations of limbs, need for dialysis, strokes, heart attacks, and many others.

Prevention: Type 2 diabetes is mainly caused by unhealthy lifestyles. Following a healthy diet, getting adequate sleep/rest, maintaining a recommended weight, regular health screenings, and knowing your risk factors are all necessary factors in preventing type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes can **be successfully managed** by getting under a medical plan developed by the treating physician, maintaining a healthy weight, daily exercise, consuming a healthy diet, getting routine examinations (especially eye exams and foot checks) and health screenings as recommended. Daily checks of blood sugar levels.

The main objective is to develop a **lifestyle that lowers the risk for diabetes** and should one develop this disease; the goal is to seek treatments that prevents complications.

Information resources: Centers for Disease Control, American Diabetes Association, CDC, WebMD, Health Day News, Mayo Clinic, NIH

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