

Healthy Living Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2010

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 11



Health & Wellness Events

Domestic Violence Lunch-n-Learn

- Nov. 9, 2010
- Noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Oberkotter Room

Diabetes Classifications

The World Health Organization (WHO) lists diabetes types as follows:

- Type 1 diabetes
- Type 2 diabetes
- Gestational diabetes

Other types of diabetes result from specific genetic conditions, surgery, drugs, malnutrition, infections, and other illnesses.

Source: UPS RoadMap to Health

Diabetes and Blood Sugar

Hyperglycemia, or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes. Over time, hyperglycemia leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

A blood sugar level of 100 mg/dl or lower is considered normal when a person's blood is tested after a fast. Levels between 100 and 125 mg/dl are in the pre-diabetes range. A person with a blood sugar of 126 mg/dl or above has diabetes. These numbers measure the amount of sugar in a given amount of blood. The sugar is measured in milligrams and the amount of blood is a deciliter (dl), which is 1/10 of a liter.

Source: UPS RoadMap to Health

Diabetes

Definition

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body can not effectively use the insulin it produces.

Symptoms

Diabetes often goes undiagnosed because many of its symptoms appear harmless. If you have any of the following symptoms, you are encouraged to see your health care provider right away.

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Unusual irritability
- Blurry vision

Diabetes facts

- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that between 180 and 240 million people worldwide have diabetes. This number is likely to more than double by 2030.
- Diabetes is one of the leading causes of kidney failure. Ten to twenty percent of people with diabetes die of kidney failure.
- 20.8 million Americans have diabetes; that's approximately seven percent of the U.S. population.
- Almost half of diabetes-related deaths occur in people over the age of 70 years; 55 percent of diabetes-related deaths are in women.

Prevention tips

- Reduce your portion size and eat those foods you love to eat less often.
- Make healthy choices at fast food restaurants.
- Eat slowly. It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to send a signal to your brain that you are full.
- Make fewer phone calls. Catch up with friends on a regular basis during planned walks.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way home, or walk to work several days a week.
- Deliver a message in-person to a co-worker instead of e-mail.

Commonly Missed Diabetes Tests

If you suspect you may have diabetes, ask your doctor whether you should have the following tests.

- **Hemoglobin A1c.** A blood test that checks average blood sugar level for the last two to three months
- **Dilated eye exam.** An eye care professional uses eye drops to temporarily widen, or dilate, the black part of the eyes (pupils) to see inside the eyes. Uncontrolled diabetes can damage the eyes, harming vision and possibly leading to blindness
- **Foot exam.** A check of the foot's nerves and blood circulation. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to foot problems that may eventually lead to amputation

Source: UPS RoadMap to Health



Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness in the United States, with between 12,000 to 24,000 new cases of blindness every year attributed to diabetes.

Retinopathy is the word used to describe damage to the blood vessels of the retina. Prolonged high blood glucose can damage the blood vessels. The blood vessels can become enlarged or clogged. They can become weak and rupture. The retina can become detached from the back of the eye. If the retina becomes detached, you may see flashes, dark spots or a “dark curtain” over part of your vision. A detached retina needs immediate medical attention.

Source: diabetes.about.com

Gestational Diabetes Affects Mother and Baby

Gestational diabetes happens in a woman who develops diabetes during pregnancy. Some women have more than one pregnancy affected by diabetes that disappears after the pregnancy ends. About half of women with gestational diabetes will develop Type 2 diabetes later.

If not controlled, gestational diabetes can cause the baby to grow very large and lead to problems with delivery for the mother and the baby. Gestational diabetes can be controlled with diet and exercise, or the mother might be required to also take insulin to achieve control.

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are often present before a woman gets pregnant. If not controlled before and during pregnancy, this can lead to birth defects and cause the mother to experience other problems such as high blood pressure, kidney disease, nerve damage, heart disease, or blindness.

Source: www.cdc.gov

Diabetes Management Challenges for Seniors

Diagnosis can be difficult. Diagnosing diabetes becomes more difficult when there are symptoms that are frequently associated with aging. Older people may not pay attention to chronic thirst and frequent urination; instead just chalking them up to old age. Problems such as blurred vision may be masked if cataracts or other age-related diseases are also present. Fatigue and weakness in the extremities may be considered just a natural process of aging.

Complications are more likely. If diabetes goes undiagnosed for a long time, the incidence of complications can be higher due to long term damage and high blood sugar. If other medical problems are occurring at the same time, these complications may not even be noticed until they become serious and life threatening.

Affordable health care. Seniors may not be able to afford the extra expense of doctor visits, nutritionists, extra medications, and supplies needed to keep diabetes under control.

Transportation to and from appointments. Often physical limitations prevent seniors from driving or taking public transportation. It can be difficult to get to doctor’s appointments, pharmacies, nutritionists and other health related destinations when transportation is unavailable.

Adequate nutrition. Sometimes a fixed income means trying to cut costs and live as economically as possible. Eating healthy can be expensive and difficult to accomplish.

Getting enough exercise. Physical activity is beneficial for all seniors; especially so for seniors with diabetes, since exercise helps keep blood sugar in control. Limited mobility can interfere with getting exercise.

Source: diabetes.about.com

Children and Type 1 Diabetes

When a child has been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, it can be overwhelming and frightening. Here are five major areas that parents need to focus on in this situation:

Understanding insulin dosing. Because your child’s body can no longer make insulin, it must be replaced throughout the day, usually by injecting it. There are several methods of insulin dosing, including fixed doses of intermediate and rapid-acting insulin, long acting insulin, and insulin pumps.

Blood glucose testing is vital. Your child’s blood glucose should be tested before meals and at bedtime. The National Diabetes Education Program recommends appropriate blood glucose levels for children. These vary by age group and may be adjusted depending on your child’s individual experiences with hypoglycemia.

Learn to manage low blood sugar. Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) is a common problem of children with Type 1 diabetes. Symptoms include irritability, shakiness, trembling or weakness, lack of coordination, drowsiness or confusion, headache, dizziness, double vision, convulsions, unconsciousness, or a blood glucose level below 70.

Eating right is key. A registered dietitian, nutritionist, diabetes educator or other healthcare professional should help you develop a plan of healthy eating habits for your child. The plan should be balanced so that blood glucose levels do not fluctuate too much and meet the needs of your growing child.

Exercise affects blood sugar, too. Physical activity lowers blood glucose level. Children with diabetes should get regular daily exercise. Parents need to be aware that hypoglycemia can occur during exercise, so children should check their blood glucose levels before they start to exercise. If a child’s blood glucose is low, he or she should have a carbohydrate snack and rest until the blood glucose level returns to normal.

Source: diabetes.about.com