

Diabetes Education

Striving to Defeat Diabetes

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Play it Safe with Summer Fun

By Myra Garza, RN, CDE

While you enjoy your summer, you must remember that diabetes never takes a vacation. Extra care is needed to protect feet and skin from injury during the summer. Why? Diabetes can make foot and skin injuries hard to detect and hard to heal.

Over time, high blood sugar affects circulation, causing poor blood flow and slow healing. This increases your risk of infection or the loss of foot or leg. High blood sugar also causes damage to the nerves and the ability to feel sensations such as pain, heat and cold. And, when you can't feel pain, you may overlook injuries. Nerve damage also changes your joints and can take away your ability to sweat, which keeps skin moist and cool.

Protect yourself. Know how to prevent, detect and care for injuries before, during and after all of your summer activities. Tips to help you include:

- Wear water shoes at the pool or beach
- Use sunscreen and wear sunglasses
- Check your comfortable shoes and thick socks for any roughness, seams or lint that could cause irritation
- Look at your feet for redness, blisters or broken skin—before and after any activity
- Pat yourself dry after showers and use moisturizer
- Wear comfortable, moisture wicking clothes
- Avoid hot showers, baths, tubs or saunas to prevent burns
- Avoid being outdoors if it is too hot
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after any physical activity
- Carry carbohydrate snacks in case of low blood sugar
- Wear a medical ID tag, bracelet or necklace
- Test your blood sugar more often to get or stay in control

Clean sores or wounds with warm water and a mild skin cleanser, dry carefully, and cover with a dry dressing. Inspect cuts or scrapes twice daily. Watch for signs of healing or infection. Call your doctor if your wound does not heal in two to four days, becomes painful, swells, turns red, feels hot to the touch, or begins draining. Remember an old proverb: “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”



Spotting Pre-Diabetes

By Nancy Leighton Robinson, RN, MSN, LHRM

Access to precise screening is critical for those who are at risk for developing diabetes. Early detection can prevent complications or further progression of the disease.

Pre-diabetes is a condition that can lead to the development of type 2 diabetes. An estimated 57 million American adults have pre-diabetes, a condition defined by impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG), which places a person at substantial risk for developing diabetes. Over a 3-5 year period, people with pre-diabetes have a 5 to 15 times greater chance of developing type 2 diabetes over people with normal blood glucose levels.

The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) has established the goal of pre-diabetes treatment to bring blood sugar levels to normal and sustain them in the normal range. *Educating an individual with pre-diabetes about how to make healthy lifestyle changes is the key strategy to attain this goal.*

According to data from the *Third National Health and Nutrition Examination* survey, screening for pre-diabetes could identify some of the 6.5 million people ages 45-74 with previously undiagnosed diabetes. The total number of overweight adults in the United States who are 45-74 years of age and have pre-diabetes or undiagnosed diabetes is estimated to be well over 20 million.

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There is a critical need for effective programs targeting prevention for people at high risk for developing diabetes. Improved awareness of pre-diabetes can serve as primary prevention of type 2 diabetes. This symbolizes a unique opportunity to reduce the impact of diabetes and associated complications.

The Diabetes Education program at Health Central will offer a three hour class on pre-diabetes beginning in July 2011. Please contact Health Central Diabetes Education Center at 407.296.1447 for more information and to register for class.

Let's Stop Diabetes Now

By Margarth Joseph, RN, BSC, D.ED

In 2009, the American Diabetes Association launched a movement to end diabetes based on two words: “STOP DIABETES.” These are powerful words that should resonate with anyone dealing with this disease.

A growing number of Americans are diagnosed with type II diabetes. Many more young people are dealing with the symptoms of the disease. Members of my own family are being affected. Every night, before bedtime, my 8 year old son's prayer finishes with, “God take away my diabetes.” I hope that my testimony can be echoed in the hearts of our community's families; especially the Haitian community, which is predisposed to the disease due to diet and lifestyle. Their meals are concentrated in carbohydrates, and they visit doctors infrequently—unless they become very sick.

My experience with diabetic patients dates back 30 years. As a young nurse, I used to care for ulcerative wounds in the legs of some elderly patients. Later, I provided care in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to patients in diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). It was challenging to take care of those patients who often came in with extremely high blood sugar levels.

While we are waiting for a diabetes cure, we must take control of the disease through proactive measures. Seeing a doctor regularly; being physically active; taking prescribed medications; adopting good eating habits; and committing to lifestyle changes.

Our objective at the Diabetes Education Center at Health Central Hospital is to help each patient take control of their disease. Health Central is committed to providing a caring, compassionate staff to help our diabetic community members stop diabetes—now!

RELATED RESOURCES:

Diabetes Support Group

Meets the last Tuesday of the month from 6pm to 8pm

Upcoming Dates: • July 26th • August 30th • September 27th

Call 407.296.1447 to RSVP

Diabetes Education Classes for Type I, Type II, Gestational and Pre-diabetes

Classes available in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole to get you on the right track.

Doctor's referral required

For more information call 407.296.1447