

November: Diabetes Awareness Month

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. The goal is to raise awareness and understanding of diabetes, its consequences, management and prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Recent estimates project that as many as one in three American adults will have diabetes in 2050, and an additional 79 million Americans are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The American Diabetes Association estimates that the total national cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States is \$245 billion.



Diabetes is a serious disease. If it isn't managed, it can damage many parts of the body, leading to heart attacks, strokes, amputation, blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage. But there is good news: diabetes complications can be prevented or delayed by properly managing blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

You can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes through a healthy lifestyle. Making just a few small changes can make a big impact on your weight and health.

Eating well to maintain a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. It can seem hard to make healthy food choices, particularly if you are on a budget and short on time. But there are some simple steps you can take to help you and your family eat healthier. Choose 2 or 3 of these suggestions to start today. Then come back another day and try a few more.

Build a Healthier Plate

- Use a grocery list when shopping for food to help you choose more fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Buy leaner meats (such as chicken, turkey and lean cuts of pork or beef such as sirloin or chuck roast) and lower fat dairy products (like low-fat or skim milk and yogurt).
- Buy whole grain breads and cereals.
- Save money by buying less soda, sweets and chips or other snack foods.
- Remember that special "dietetic" or "diabetic" foods often cost extra money and may not be much healthier than simply following the suggestions given here.



Being overweight raises your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. It can cause other problems, too, like high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, and high blood glucose (sugar). Losing weight can help you prevent and manage these problems. And you don't have to lose a lot of weight to see the benefit. Even losing 10-15 pounds can make a big difference.

Here's what works for people who have lost weight and kept it off:

- They cut back on calories and fat.
- They're physically active most days of the week.
- They eat breakfast every day.
- They keep a record of their weight, what they eat and drink, and what they do for physical activity.
- It's much easier to lose weight when you change the way you eat and also increase your activity.

Even if you've never exercised before, find small ways to add physical activity to your day. You'll get benefits, even if your activities aren't strenuous. Once physical activity is a part of your routine, you'll wonder how you did without it.

Just choose one or two things you'd like to try to get started. Then set a realistic, achievable plan to make it happen.

To learn more about diabetes check out these links:

National Diabetes Education Program

1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337)

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

1-800-877-1600

www.eatright.org

American Association of Diabetes Educators

1-800-338-3633

www.diabeteseducator.org

American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

www.diabetes.org

Adapted from American Diabetes Association website