

Cherokee Regional Medical Center
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PRESS RELEASE

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November 7, 2012- (Part 1 in a series of 5)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month Severity/Epidemic and Risk Factors of Diabetes

Data released from the American Diabetes Association have found almost 26 million people or 8.3% of the population in the United States have diabetes, and this number continues to increase. Approximately 19 million people are diagnosed, 7 million are undiagnosed, and 79 million are pre-diabetic. These numbers are astounding, especially when you consider the \$65 billion that is lost in worker productivity each year and medical expenses that are 2.3 times higher among those with diabetes than without.

Many wonder what the cause is for this dramatic increase in the diagnosis of diabetes. While there is no one specific cause for the development of diabetes, a combination of personal health history, genetics, and lifestyle choices play a role in whether or not a person develops the disease. There are many risks associated with the development of diabetes that you have no control over, which includes your family history, ethnicity, and personal health, such as a history of diabetes during pregnancy. Being overweight, inactive, and smoking all put us at great risk for developing diabetes as well. However, we can improve our lifestyle choices while decreasing other risk factors, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Diabetes is unlike many other diseases as some of the effects may not be felt until many years down the road. Several of those with diabetes feel fine when first diagnosed, which likely took place during a routine office visit, and don't always understand the importance of treating the disease. While you won't feel the effects of diabetes overnight, in contrast to a heart attack, stroke, or cancer, be aware that diabetes is a disease to be taken seriously. Complications of diabetes result from uncontrolled high blood glucose (sugar) over a long period of time, causing damage to the blood vessels and nervous system of the body. Diabetes complications include but are not limited to: stroke, heart attack, blindness, kidney disease, nervous system disease, sexual dysfunction, non-healing wounds, and amputations.

November is National Diabetes Month. Educate yourself on diabetes and find out if you're at risk.

Are you at risk for diabetes? Take the diabetes risk test at www.diabetes.org!

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November 7, 2012- (Part 2 in a series of 5)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month... Importance of Checking

One of the biggest concerns for those diagnosed with diabetes is the need to check blood glucose regularly. Testing is done using a small electronic device that is able to measure the amount of glucose or sugar that is in the blood.

Blood glucose testing is an important tool for managing diabetes and preventing long term complications. Blood glucose results tell you and your healthcare provider how well your diabetes treatment plan is working. It can help you to:

- Know how well you are doing at achieving your overall treatment goals
- Know how well your medications are working
- Understand the effects of exercise, food, and medication on your blood glucose levels
- Understand the effects of illness, injury, or stress have on your blood glucose levels
- Help identify very high or very low blood glucose levels

When should you check your blood glucose? Your diabetes care team and you will decide when and how often to check blood sugar. Times may include when you get up in the morning, before and after meals, and after physical activity. If you are unsure of when to test, your doctor or diabetes educator can help you decide.

If your blood glucose gets too low, you may be experiencing hypoglycemia. You may feel shaky, sweaty, dizzy, anxious, hungry, weak or tired, nervous or upset, have blurry vision or a headache. Low blood sugar may be caused by medications, diet, or activity. If left untreated, low blood sugars can be very serious. Treatment of low blood sugar can be as simple as drinking a ½ cup of juice or regular soda.

If your blood glucose is too high, you may be experiencing hyperglycemia. You may feel very thirsty, very hungry, sleepy, need to urinate more than usual, have blurry vision, or dry skin. It is important to seek medical attention if this is happening frequently as you may need an adjustment in your meal plan or medications.

The only way to know if the symptoms you are feeling are related to your blood glucose is to check. Keeping your blood glucose in target level helps you better manage your diabetes and prevent, delay, or slow the progression of long-term complications. For someone with diabetes, the goal for blood glucose

is between 70 and 130 mg/dL before meals and less than 180 mg/dL after meals. Every time you check your blood glucose, log your results. Include detailed information, such as if you ate more than usual, if you exercised, and what medication you took. It is important to bring this information with you to your appointments with your doctor or diabetes educator. Knowing this information helps your diabetes care team better plan your diabetes treatment.

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November 7, 2012- (Part 3 in a series of 5)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month... Diabetes and Diet

When people hear the word “diabetes,” most think of a restricted diet and no more sweets or bread or pasta. This is a myth! The so-called “Diabetic Diet” includes eating habits everyone should be incorporating into their lives! There are no lists of “good” and “bad” foods for people with diabetes, but portion control is key!

Carbohydrates are essentially sugars that are broken down in the body after eating foods and then increase blood sugar. By monitoring your intake of carbohydrates, you can help control blood sugar levels and avoid blood sugar becoming too high or too low. Carbohydrates are needed for energy and body processes so they should not be cut out, despite diet fads and the media.

Carbohydrates are found in almost everything – fruits, vegetables, pastas, bread, desserts, fried chicken, beans, milk, yogurt, and even salad dressings. Do people with diabetes need to monitor carbohydrate intake? Yes. Do people with diabetes need to cut out foods? No.

Where do you begin to create a healthier diet? First, focus on the plate method. The plate method follows the MyPlate method of eating. Half of the plate should consist of vegetables and some fruit, one-fourth of the plate should contain a lean protein, and the last fourth of the plate should be a carbohydrate. It is important to eat 3 meals per day on a regularly scheduled time and 1 to 2 snacks if needed. Watching portion sizes is essential to reaching nutrition related goals and helps with weight loss and controlling blood sugar levels.

Because carbohydrates have an immediate impact on blood sugar levels, choose ones that are higher in fiber and whole grains to maximize nutrition and stabilize blood sugar more than refined, processed carbohydrates, such as white bread. Foods with higher fiber will help you feel full for a longer period of time, help with weight management, keep you regular, maintain stable blood sugar levels in the body, and help decrease cholesterol levels. Good choices of carbohydrates with higher amounts of fiber include fruits and vegetables, whole grain pasta, whole wheat bread, brown rice, beans and legumes, and nuts. However, make sure to gradually increase fiber to avoid stomach issues and increase water and liquids to prevent constipation.

The amount of carbohydrates eaten at each meal depends on the individual and goals, which may include weight, blood sugar control, blood pressure, and/or cholesterol. Cherokee Regional Medical Center

provides a comprehensive Diabetes Self-Management Training program, as well as a free Diabetes Connect group that meets once per month to learn about various topics related to diabetes, including diet and nutrition.

So, keep in mind, whether you are diabetic or not, eat 3 well balanced meals per day following the plate method and controlling portion sizes, while eating desserts and sweets in moderation!

For more information, check out www.diabetes.org, www.choosemyplate.gov, www.diabetesselfmanagement.com, and www.diabeticlivingonline.com for more information or call the Cherokee Regional Medical Center at 712-225-3368 and ask to speak to one of the diabetes educators.

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November 7, 2012- (Part 4 in a series of 5)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month... Diabetes and Exercise

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes - a large number and strain on our population. Direct medical cost to Americans is in excess of \$116 Billion. These are some scary figures. Where do we start?

We start by moving. Get up and exercise. The American Diabetes Association recommends that a person with diabetes get a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity per week, which breaks down to 30 minutes for 5 days per week. Being physically active provides a number of benefits including helping the body respond to insulin, improving circulation, and reducing stress, which also affects insulin levels. Add the benefits of physical activity to a proper diet and you will be well on your way to preventing the occurrence and/or managing diabetes.

The last step to getting moving is breaking down the barriers that keep us from any physical activity. Time is always a big factor. However, analyze your day as you can usually find a half hour to be active. If you cannot find a full half hour, split the time into 10 to 15 minute sections before work, at lunch, after work, or when it is convenient in your schedule. Consult your doctor before starting any physical activity or exercise plans, and then seek help from gym staff if you decide to join a gym or the CRMC Wellness Center. You don't have to join a gym though! You can easily find things around the house to meet your physical activity needs. Examples may include walking up and down stairs, lifting cans of food or milk jugs, or going for a walk outside.

If you have diabetes, there are some precautions:

1. Consult your doctor before starting any physical activity or exercise routine.
2. Monitor your blood glucose (or blood sugar) levels before, during, and after exercise.
3. Wear good, supportive shoes.
4. Start slowly and with areas you are comfortable.
5. Get help from staff members with any questions.

One of our goals at Cherokee Regional Medical Center is to help everyone start moving to maintain or improve lifestyle behaviors. Living with diabetes is not easy, but by making a few lifestyle changes, you can manage diabetes even better. So get started today and move!

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November 7, 2012- (Part 5 in a series of 5)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month... Putting it all Together for Prevention

Over the past few weeks, the Cherokee Regional Medical Center's health professionals have been teaming up to spread the word about diabetes. As a recap to put it all together to help prevent diabetes, here are the most important things you can do:

- Check your family history – for any health conditions and diabetes. Making lifestyle changes early can decrease health risks later in life.
- Visit your family physician – for a regular check up and make sure you have your blood pressure and weight taken and labs done, including a fasting blood glucose level and cholesterol.
- Monitor your diet – a healthy diet and monitoring portion sizes are key to controlling blood sugar levels and can result in a healthier weight.
- Exercise everyday – whether working around the house cleaning, walking or working outside, or exercising at a wellness center, 30 minutes a day of exercise to increase your heart rate helps steer clear of developing diabetes.
- Stress less – handling stress and decreasing stress will improve your overall health!

Cherokee Regional Medical Center provides a comprehensive Diabetes Self-Management Training program. The Diabetes Self-Management Program includes the following:

- Diabetes BASICS – a comprehensive program for those newly diagnosed for who have never been through an education program
- Gestational BASICS – a program for mothers with pregnancy-induced diabetes
- Insulin Instruction – training for those beginning insulin therapy or adjusting insulin doses
- Diabetes Update – training for those who need or want an update on current diabetes care
- Pre-Diabetes BASICS – a program for those at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes and focusing on lifestyle changes for prevention

A FREE Diabetes Connect group that meets once per month is available to anyone affected by or who knows someone with diabetes or wants to prevent it themselves. Join us to learn about various topics related to diabetes and health. This group meets the first Monday of every month from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Education Room on the first floor of CRMC.

For more information regarding these programs or diabetes in general, call Cherokee Regional Medical Center at 712-225-5101 and ask to speak to one of the diabetes educators.