

November is American Diabetes Month!

By

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November is American Diabetes Month and with the holidays so close, it is important for everyone to be aware of the facts about diabetes and the need to be aware of the risks associated with the disease. Here are some recent stats about diabetes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Diabetes is a leading cause of kidney failure, blindness, and amputations.
- Diabetes is a major cause of heart disease and stroke.
- Nearly 24 million Americans have diabetes, and about 6 million of them are unaware of their disease.

Obesity is a major risk factor. During the past 20 years there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States, and this is a major factor. Research has shown that population increases in diabetes have coincided with increases in obesity, and the type 2 diabetes epidemic is believed to be largely a result of the increase in obesity levels. Diagnosed diabetes has increased, particularly in overweight and obese individuals, and improvements in diabetes awareness and enhanced detection are occurring among the most obese.

Managing diabetes is not easy but it's worth it! Every 24 hours more than 4,000 adults are diagnosed with diabetes and approximately 200 people die from the disease. Diabetes is a major cause of heart disease and stroke and a leading cause of leg and foot amputations unrelated to injury, kidney failure, and new cases of blindness in adults. However, people with diabetes can lower their risk of complications by following important steps to control the disease by:

- Talking to your healthcare provider about how to manage your blood glucose (A1C), blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- Getting vaccinated against seasonal flu, H1N1, and pneumonia. People with diabetes are more likely to die from pneumonia or influenza than people who do not have diabetes.
- Staying at a healthy weight and engaging in some type of moderate physical activity each week along with muscle strengthening activities. This will help you control your weight, blood glucose, and blood pressure, as well as **raise** your **good** cholesterol and **lower** your **bad** cholesterol.

Finally, there are ways to help prevent diabetes. **Pre-diabetes** is a condition in which individuals have blood glucose levels higher than normal but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. In 2007, at least 57 million American adults were estimated to have pre-diabetes. They have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. However, progression to diabetes among those with pre-diabetes is not inevitable. Recent studies have shown that people at high risk for type 2 diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by losing 5 to 7 percent of their body weight. You can do that by eating healthier and getting moderate physical activity for at least 2 and ½ hours each week, or 30

minutes each five-day period. Any positive lifestyle changes made by persons at risk for diabetes will help to stop the rise in new cases of this disease.

In conclusion, any steps you can take to reduce the onset of this disease will result in better health for you and your loved ones. For more information and resources on this subject, the following website may be very helpful:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/LivingWithDiabetes/>. Also, the Hardee County Extension Office at 863-773-2164 has helpful educational resources available to you through the University of Florida. With the holidays and a new year just around the corner, start today to become healthier. You will be thankful you did!