

MEDICAL HEALTH

- AIDS Resources
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- Cancer Treatment
- Chiropractors
- Clinics
- Diabetes Management
- Diagnostic Services
- Hospitals
- Integrative Medicine Centers
- Pain Clinics/Therapists
- Physicians/Specialists:
 - Cancer/Oncologists
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 - Vascular Surgeons
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DIABETES: THE PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Diabetes: Any of several disorders characterized by increased urine production and inadequate production or utilization of insulin, resulting in excessive amounts of glucose (sugar) in the blood and urine, excessive thirst, weight loss, and, in some cases, progressive destruction of small blood vessels, leading to complications such as infections and gangrene of the limbs and blindness.

Type I Diabetes aka Juvenile Diabetes: A severe form of diabetes, perhaps hereditary, typically occurring before age 25, usually resulting in dependence on externally administered insulin.

Type II Diabetes aka Adult-Onset Diabetes: A mild, sometimes asymptomatic form of diabetes, characterized by diminished tissue sensitivity to insulin, exacerbated by obesity and often treatable by diet and exercise.

“Diabetes is a major health problem,” says Dr. Richard Tooker, Chief Medical officer and Deputy Health Officer for the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department. Citing national and local statistics, Tooker pegs diabetes as the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. and Michigan.

Wanetta Czarnecki, R.N., B.S.N., Certified Diabetes Educator and Coordinator of the Diabetes Education Program at Allegan General Hospital, recites a claim by the American Diabetic Association that, worldwide, one person dies from diabetes and two persons are diagnosed with diabetes every ten seconds, resulting in “a doubling of the population of people with diabetes.” Part of this rise in the incidence of the disease is due to quicker and better diagnostic techniques along with a new classification of “borderline” or “pre-” diabetes.

A normal glucose level is between 70 and 95 milligrams of

sugar per deciliter of blood (mg/dl) after fasting eight to ten hours. Glucose levels above 150 mg/dl have been the traditional indicator for diabetic diagnosis, but current protocols now set that number at 126 mg/dl or above. Glucose levels between 100 and 125 mg/dl are classified as borderline or pre-diabetes, a condition that Czarnecki describes as “the most powerful preventive stage” during which she encourages persons to enroll in a pre-diabetes class.

“We teach a diabetic meal plan that’s healthy,” she says. “Mostly, that relates to serving or portion sizes, lower fat content, lower sodium content and eating a variety of foods – not fast or fried – but whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables.”

Likewise, Tooker focuses on pre-



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vention with the admonition, “Eat better, move more.” The latter half of that phrase translates into 30 or more minutes of moderate exercise four or five days a week. And what’s moderate? “Walking at a pace whereby it’s difficult to carry on a conversation, or any such activity that creates huffing and puffing. That’s the kind of intensity we’re striving for,” he says.

An exercise guide published by Allegan General Hospital lists “any such activity” in two categories: sports/recreation and daily living. While most sports activities, even bowling and billiards, will burn calories with an adequate investment of time, engaging in tasks around the home will also reduce the risk of diabetes. With that in mind, an hour or two of chores, such as gardening, ironing, scrubbing floors, shoveling snow, vacuuming and pushing a power mower, are beneficial to a person’s health. Even people with a desk job should get up and walk around at least every 30 minutes. Climb stairs, walk around the parking lot, bend over, stretch, whatever, just get out of that chair.

Moderate portions of food and a moderate level of activity combine to reduce weight, which is the ultimate means to reduce the risk of diabetes. In order to lose one pound of body mass in a week, a person needs to eliminate 500 calories from the body each day. “If you burn up 300 calories with exercise and reduce your caloric intake by 200 calories daily, you’re on your way!” claims the Allegan General Hospital guide.

Sounds easy enough, right? Ready, set, gung ho!

Whoa! says Czarnecki, who urges starting exercise programs slowly and increasing physical activity each day. People with existing physical challenges, such as poor joints, should be very careful. But everyone should do something to be more physically active every day. And remember: cleaning and yard work count.

In addition, both Czarnecki and Tooker recommend that people treat high blood pressure and high chole-

sterol, manage stress, get enough sleep and quit smoking. “Knowledge and education is the ‘vaccine’ that prevents, controls or diminishes the negative health impacts of diabetes,” Tooker states.

“That’s why we teach healthy eating habits,” Czarnecki says. “That’s why we tell people to eat fresh fruits and vegetables every day. And whole grain foods. Switch from soda pop to water or diet pop. Eat or drink three servings of low fat dairy products like yogurt or cheese. And limit the junk food: candies, cookies, ice cream and chips. That’s the message we’re trying to educate.”

“Type II diabetes is preventable,” Tooker concludes. “So are its complications of heart disease, kidney disease, blindness and early death. We can help people stay healthy through education. That’s our purpose – to prevent sickness.”

SOURCES:

Dictionary

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department, (269) 373-5200; <http://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/directory.htm>; pio@kalcounty.com

Allegan General Hospital, Diabetes Education, (269) 673-8424 or (269) 686-4088 or (269) 686-4901; <http://www.aghosp.org/agh.nsf/View/DiabetesEducation>

American Diabetes Association; National Call Center, <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>; AskADA@diabetes.org

HOW BIG IS A SERVING?

That depends on what you’re eating.

For fats, oils and sweets, a serving is only one tablespoon. Bread is one slice or one small roll. Rice, pasta, noodles and uncooked cereal is one-half cup. The same is true for cooked or raw vegetables, but a serving of leafy vegetables is a full cup while a serving of vegetable juice is a compromise at three-quarters cup.

For fruits, measure by the item. One whole peach, pear, banana, apple, nectarine, orange, kiwi, persimmon, pomelo, prickly pear and quince; or two plums; three apricots and figs; five dates, kumquats, prunes and passion fruits; but only one-half of an avocado, pomegranate, lemon, lime, mango, or papaya. For smaller fruits, a serving is one cup of most berries, cherries without the pits, currants, grapes and melon chunks. A serving of dried fruit is one-quarter cup, except for raisins, which merit one-half cup, and dried apricots for which a serving is 10 halves.

Servings of dairy products offer comparable diversity. A serving is one cup of milk, buttermilk or yogurt; two tablespoons of half-and-half, cream or sour cream; one ounce (one slice) of most cheeses; one ounce of cream cheese (one-eighth of a package); one-half cup of cottage cheese; one tablespoon of grated parmesan cheese; and two teaspoons of butter.

For the protein foods of meat, nuts, eggs and beans, a serving is three ounces of most meat, including beef, pork, lamb, poultry and fish; one ounce of nuts, which are very high in fat and calorie content; two tablespoons of peanut butter; one large egg or one-quarter cup of egg substitute; and one-half cup of most varieties of cooked beans.

SOURCE:

Diet Bites™ <http://www.dietbites.com/diet-serving-size.html>