



Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”
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To: Local Media

From: Dan Lowery, Health Educator

RE: Diabetes (American Diabetes Alert Day 2010)

Release Date: March 2010

American Diabetes Alert Day 2010

On Tuesday, March 23, 2010 the American Diabetes Association is issuing the 22nd annual call to action for individuals to find out their risk for type 2 diabetes. In Michigan, there were 685,000 reported persons with diabetes in 2008, which is over 8.5% of our state’s population. Nationwide, 23.6 million Americans are diagnosed diabetics, or 7.8% of the population, with 6 million yet undiscovered cases. Fifty-seven million have pre-diabetes, placing them at an increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Every 20 seconds, a person is diagnosed with diabetes; that’s 4,320 individuals every day. If the current trend continues, 1 in 3 American children born today will develop diabetes. Every year, diabetes causes more deaths than breast cancer and AIDS combined.

The term “diabetes” refers to a number of diseases; the most common in order being: type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and gestational diabetes. In each, the body does not produce or properly use insulin—a hormone produced by the pancreas that is needed to convert sugar starches or more commonly, glucose, into the energy we need to live. This causes hyperglycemia, an excessive blood glucose level. The exact causes of diabetes are still unclear, although weight, ethnicity, family history, and age play an important role in the development of diabetes and its complications.

Type 1 diabetes – Previously known as juvenile diabetes (due to being diagnosed usually in childhood). Type 1 diabetes is where the body’s pancreas fails to produce insulin, the hormone that “unlocks” the cells of the body, allowing glucose (sugar) to enter and fuel them. Type1=accounts for 5-10% of all cases of diabetes. Taking insulin daily to survive is a must for people who have this type

Type 2 diabetes - This is the most common form of diabetes. It develops when the body cannot produce or properly use insulin. For many years, people referred to type 2 as “adult onset” diabetes because it typically showed up in older people. Older people (and minorities) still carry the highest risk for type 2, but a growing number of children and young adults are now being diagnosed with it.

Pre-diabetes - Before people develop type 2 diabetes, they almost always have “pre-diabetes”- blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Gestational diabetes - This type of diabetes occurs during pregnancy and usually goes away after the baby is born. It is very important to treat gestational diabetes because it can harm the developing fetus. Mothers who experience gestational diabetes have a 2 in 3 chance of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

People can show symptoms of diabetes such as: excessive thirst, frequent urination, and blurred vision. However, most people when they are diagnosed are not showing these signs. That is why it is important to get your glucose level checked. People can have type 2 diabetes for years without knowing it and the excessive amount of glucose in the bloodstream can cause damage to the heart, kidneys, eyes, nerves, and can cause a stroke.

What is the link between diabetes and obesity? Being overweight or obese is a leading risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes and makes treatment more difficult. You can delay or prevent becoming diabetic if you take action to manage your blood glucose such as: making changes in your diet, increasing your level of physical activity and losing weight. Research has shown that lifestyle interventions are more cost effective than medications. Studies have shown that people who lose as little as 10-15 pounds and exercise just 30 minutes a day 5 times a week reduced their risk of developing diabetes, even by 58%!

Mark, Tuesday, March 23rd on your calendar or planner as a reminder to get your glucose checked. Make a commitment to eat healthier and consume smaller portions. Increase your exercise level so that you can drop that extra 10-15 pounds this year. It will all help to keep you healthier and decrease your chances of becoming a type 2 diabetic. For more information log onto www.cmdhd.org, www.diabetes.org, or call 1-800-DIABETES.

This article is brought to you by the staff at Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves residents in the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon.

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