

In our last email, we mentioned that physical activity can help prevent diseases like diabetes. This month, we would like to give you some information about Type 2 diabetes, also known as adult onset diabetes, and how being active can help to decrease your chances of being diagnosed.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes with more than 9% of the population having diabetes and an average of 1.3 million people being newly diagnosed each year. When you have diabetes, your body does not produce enough insulin or your body ignores what insulin it does produce. Insulin is what is used by the body to convert sugars, starches and other food we eat into energy. When the insulin is not used, the sugar, or glucose, builds up in your blood instead of going into your cells. A few of the symptoms that result are:

1. Feeling tired or fatigued
2. Frequent urination
3. Blurry vision
4. Increase in appetite

The long term affects of untreated or uncontrolled diabetes include blindness, kidney disease and loss of feeling (neuropathy) usually starting in your feet. Diabetics also have an increased chance of developing high blood pressure.

Diabetes can occur in people of all ages and races, but the chance of developing Type 2 diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders. It is also more common in people over 40 and people who are obese.

In San Antonio, 10.3% of the population has diabetes and 20% of the people are undiagnosed. Diabetes is also the 4th leading cause of death in San Antonio. This is much higher than the state and national averages. And although no one knows why people develop the disease, family history, obesity and a lack of exercise all contribute to the disease.

There are many things you can do to help prevent the onset of diabetes if risk factors are present.

1. Lose weight - 5-10% of your body weight
2. Exercise 30 - 45 minutes a day

Although these can seem like difficult goals to accomplish, start by setting goals that are short and realistic and start moving toward a better, healthier you.

In our next issue, we will address how you can overcome exercise barriers and discuss the benefits of being active.

References:

American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org Texas Department of State Health Services at www.dshs.state.tx.us San Antonio Metropolitan Health District at www.sanantonio.gov/health

The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.

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