Health Awareness

A New Focus On A Different Type Of Diabetes

(NAPSA)—While the media has focused much of its attention on the steady rise of diabetes in the U.S.—type 2 in particular—one form of the disease gets less coverage: monogenic diabetes.

Monogenic diabetes is a rare condition resulting from changes in a single gene. It appears in several forms:

Maturity-onset diabetes of the young (MODY) is the most common form. It usually first occurs in children or teenagers but sometimes is not found until adulthood.

Neonatal diabetes, the second common form of monogenic diabetes, occurs in the first six months of life. Sometimes, neonatal diabetes is permanent; other times, it goes away during infancy and returns later in life.

Factors to Consider

Many people with monogenic diabetes are mistakenly diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. There are several important differences, however. Unlike type 1 and type 2, monogenic diabetes is usually inherited. It is not related to being overweight or obese, as type 2 diabetes often is. Factors that may lead doctors to suspect monogenic diabetes include:

• The presence of other conditions related to the disease, such as cysts in the kidneys;

Properly diagnosing monogenic diabetes requires the involvement of a specialist.

• A family history of diabetes, especially when a parent is affected;

• Normal weight in the patient or in family members who have diabetes.

Genetic Testing And Treatment

A correct diagnosis of monogenic diabetes can lead to more effective, individualized treatment and better long-term health. Diet, exercise, insulin and oral medications are all possible treatments.

Testing of the genetic information in a blood sample can determine whether a person has a gene causing MODY or neonatal diabetes. Only a specialist, such as an endocrinologist specializing in diabetes, can diagnose monogenic diabetes.

To learn more, visit the website at www.hormone.org.