

Community Pharmacists Tackle Diabetes Epidemic

(NAPSA)—There's hopeful news for those who have diabetes or are at risk for developing the disease. A familiar community resource may be able to offer assistance in the form of information and guidance.

The Battle Against Diabetes

Diabetes is a growing epidemic in the U.S. According to the American Diabetes Association, the disease affects more than 23 million Americans, and another 57 million are likely to get the disease if they don't alter their living habits.

Diabetes can lead to a number of serious diseases, including heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney disease, nervous system disease (or neuropathy) and amputation.

Factoring in the additional costs of undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes and gestational diabetes brings the total cost of diabetes in the United States to nearly \$220 billion a year.

Experts say people with diabetes and those most at risk can benefit from the personal relationships they develop with their community pharmacist.

Community pharmacists can be the first line of defense for diabetes prevention and management—as well as for other diseases. The community pharmacy is often a community health center serving as the first point of care, for everyone from new parents to grandparents.

This service often fills a gap in the health care system by providing personalized recommendations that can help reduce people's spending on their medicines through generic medicine options, understanding their drug regimen to reduce complications and duplicate therapies, and encouraging patients to follow their drug therapy plan and schedule as designed.

Raising Awareness About Diabetes

To raise awareness about the



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ways community pharmacists can be of service to tackle the diabetes epidemic, Health Mart is providing diabetes education and free health screenings including blood pressure, total cholesterol, blood glucose and hemoglobin A1c tests through its Health Mart Healthy Living Tour. The nationwide tour features a mobile screening unit that will travel across the country to help identify people at risk for diabetes and encourage those with the disease to leverage the support of their pharmacist in managing their condition. For information, visit HealthMartHealthyLiving.com.

“Treatment for diabetes can be complicated and expensive, requiring medication and regular blood-glucose monitoring, but with ongoing care and attentiveness, the disease is also manageable,” said Tim Canning, president, Health Mart. “It’s important for diabetes patients to know that they can overcome the financial burden and complications associated with treatment by connecting with their community pharmacist, who is an integral member of the patient care team.”

Finding Hidden Sugars In Your Diet

It's estimated that Americans consume an average of 150–170

pounds of sugar per year. Much of that is hidden as an ingredient in many of the foods they eat.

While eating sugar has nothing to do with developing type 1 diabetes, it does contribute to the biggest dietary risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes—eating too much and being overweight.

Dr. Jonathan Marquess, a recognized diabetes educator and community pharmacist, is often referred to by his community as the sugar detective. As the president of The Institute for Wellness and Education, he encourages his patients and consumers to be their own sugar detective and make healthier diet and lifestyle choices.

Here are a few tips for consumers on how to better manage their sugar consumption:

- Choose a breakfast with more protein, instead of a sugary snack such as doughnuts or muffins.
- Read the label for hidden sugars, such as honey, dextrose, fructose and corn syrup, among others. These are often hidden in condiments such as ketchup and in pantry staples such as tomato sauce. They can even be found in seemingly healthy snacks, such as flavored yogurt.
- Beware of food products that are marketed as low-fat, healthy snacks. Make sure they really are low-fat and healthy by looking at the ingredients.
- Watch your portions. You can start by reading labels for portion size. For example, a standard bottle of juice is usually two servings, not one.
- Save sweets for a special occasion. If you tend to overeat on sweets, don't buy them. Instead, plan to have dessert when you are on vacation or when you want to treat yourself.

To learn more, including information about the tour, visit the website at HealthMartHealthyLiving.com.