

Health And Well-Being

Simple Diabetes Prevention

(NAPSA)—Surprising to many, studies show that more and more people of all ages are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. In fact, this year, more than 23 million Americans will be affected by diabetes, about half of them older than age 20. Even more alarming is that one-fourth of the people with diabetes are unaware that they have it.

“Diabetes is a metabolic disease, which results in an imbalance of the body’s use of glucose, a main source of energy,” said Jonathan L. Myles, MD, FCAP, a pathologist at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. “Without treatment, in diabetes, blood glucose is elevated. This may be due to decreased production of insulin or resistance of the body tissue to the insulin. If the blood glucose gets too high, glucose gets excreted in the urine, resulting in a loss of energy.”

Pathologists are physicians who study tissues and cells to identify and diagnose diseases, such as diabetes.

“The disease often goes undiagnosed because it develops slowly. In addition, many people may not get tested as they may fail to recognize symptoms,” said Dr. Myles. “However, undetected diabetes can lead to serious health complications, such as damage to your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, nerves and eyes.”

He suggests you have a fasting plasma glucose test if you are over 45 years of age. If diabetes is not detected, the test probably does not have to be repeated for three years. However, you should discuss with your physician the best screening schedule based on your risk factors. African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans are at greater risk for developing the disease. In addition, being

Diabetes Symptoms:

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Fatigue
- Tingling in hands and feet
- Blurred vision
- Trouble concentrating
- Gum infections
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Very dry skin



overweight or having a family history of the illness also increases your chances of diabetes.

Keeping a close eye on your blood glucose level is one of the best ways to identify and control diabetes. The College of American Pathologists offers a free Web site, www.MyHealthTestReminder.org. You simply enter your name, e-mail address, and the date you would like to receive the reminder to schedule a blood sugar test.

You can also get reminders about cholesterol and Pap tests, colon and prostate cancer screenings, mammograms and blood donations at this Web site.

The best way to prevent or control diabetes is to watch your weight by exercising and eating a healthy diet. Even moderate exercise, such as walking, helps to keep your blood sugar under control. Exercise also helps to lower your blood pressure and “bad” cholesterol levels.

“With regular testing, exercise and a healthy diet, you can stay one step ahead of the ill effects of diabetes,” said Dr. Myles.

For more information about how to prevent or control diabetes and other illnesses, visit the College of American Pathologists at www.cap.org.