



Diabetes Becoming Epidemic

The weight creep is finally catching up with Americans. As America gains weight and moves less, the number of cases of diabetes increases. The greatest increase is seen in type II diabetes, the diabetes associated with being overweight.

How do we know this? In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and state health agencies operate an ongoing data collection program called the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Last September, the CDC published BRFSS data showing that from 1990 to 1998, cases of diagnosed diabetes, including gestational diabetes (diabetes in pregnancy), rose 33 percent (4.9 percent to 6.5 percent) among U.S. adults.

In the February 2001 issue of *Diabetes Care*, the 1999 update of BRFSS data was reported. The number of cases of diabetes increased by another 6 percent! This brings the rise in diabetes since 1990 to 41 percent!

This devastating finding has led to the conclusion that we need to label diabetes as an "epidemic." And the rise in diabetes was not just documented in a small segment of the population. The increases were seen in every category, including when data were analyzed by sex, age, race, education, weight, and smoking status.

Prevalence increased among both women (7.4 percent to 7.6 percent) and

men (5.5 percent to 6 percent) and among all ethnic groups, including whites (5.9 percent to 6.2 percent), blacks (8.9 percent to 9.9 percent), Hispanics (7.7 percent to 8 percent) and all others (6.6 percent to 7.7 percent).

The BRFSS also links the increase in diabetes with the rising rates of obesity, a major risk factor for diabetes. The prevalence of obesity increased significantly from 17.9 percent in 1998 to 18.9 percent in 1999, an increase of 5.6 percent in one year and 57 percent from 1991.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in this country and a major contributor to serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and amputations.

If diabetes rates continue to rise, this not only will have devastating emotional and physical impacts on health, but also a major impact on health care costs. In 1997, an estimated \$98 billion was spent on health care associated with diabetes.

Currently, more than 16 million Americans have diabetes and about a third do not know they have it. While about 800,000 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each year, many cases go undiscovered. The symptoms of frequent thirst, urination, and hunger can come and go, depending on personal activity levels and food

choices. Diabetes often is diagnosed when an individual seeks medical attention for other reasons and a blood test reveals high blood sugar. The definitive diagnosis is usually made by repeat fasting blood sugars that find values over 126 mg/dl.

How can you decrease your risk of diabetes? Maintaining a healthy body weight through both food choices and regular physical exercise has the most impact on reducing your risk of type II diabetes.

The government is trying to decrease diabetes and improve treatment by coordinating a National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP). This initiative involves both public and private partners to improve diabetes treatment, promote early diagnosis, and maintain quality of life for people with diabetes. The CDC and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) are the coordinating agencies.

For more information on diabetes, visit the CDC's Web site <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes> or call toll free 1-877-CDC-DIAB (877-232-3422).

For information about nutrition and physical activity, call toll free at 1-888-CDC-4NRG (1-888-232-4674) or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa>.

What's for Dinner?

Having someone with diabetes over for dinner? Don't panic.

A diet for diabetes is basically a healthy diet. A meal that includes lean meat, poultry, fish, or a vegetarian source of protein, a starch such as a baked potato, and a vegetable and/or salad can easily meet most people's needs.

Let guests choose their portion size so they can decide on the amount that matches the quantity of carbohydrate that maintains the best blood sugar and weight.

Source: www.healthandage.com

Get Help with Health Care Choices

Need help obtaining health insurance? Confused by your insurance policy? Unsure about your health care rights? A new consumer publication from the Oregon Insurance Division may be able to help.

The free booklet, "Consumer Guide to Health Insurance," is designed to help Oregonians better understand their insurance policies and make informed health care choices.

The booklet discusses what kinds of insurance plans are available, identifies resources to obtain coverage, and explains your options if you lose your employer-sponsored group health insurance coverage.

It also summarizes your health care rights under Oregon's Patient Protection Act, the Unfair Claims Settlement Act, and other laws and rules. In addition, the booklet includes sections on frequently asked questions and a glossary of health insurance terms.

To receive a free copy of the booklet, write to Publications, Oregon Insurance Division, 350 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301-3883, or send an e-mail request to dcbs.inmail@state.or.us. The booklet also is available on the division's Web site www.oregoninsurance.org.

Check Out Your Knees

Running is a great form of exercise that can become addicting (after three or four months of feeling close to cardiac arrest). Running requires good listening skills – you need to listen to your body. Running "through" the aches and pains may not be the best thing to do. Here are some common knee problems to watch (and feel) for:

- ☞ Patellar tendonitis feels like a sharp pain between the tendon that joins the kneecap to the shinbone. It occurs with too much downhill running or over-training. Knee straps, leg-extension machines, and ice twice a day may help.
- ☞ Chondromalacia is a burning, achy sensation on top of the kneecap. This is caused by weak quadriceps muscles, over-pronation, running in worn shoes, downhill running, or sudden mileage increases. Leg-press machines, straight leg raises, and cross training by cycling all may help with the pain.
- ☞ Iliotibial band syndrome is a stabbing pain on the outside of the knee caused by bowed legs, leg-length differences, tight quadriceps, over-pronation, or sudden increases in mileage. A hot shower massage and proper stretching may help with this pain.

Source: www.topica.com/tipworld

