



Screening Can Save Your Vision

Diabetes can pose a serious threat to your vision. Diabetic eye disease refers to eye problems that people with diabetes may face as a complication of diabetes.

The leading cause of blindness in the U.S. is diabetic retinopathy. It's caused by changes in the blood vessels in the back of the eye caused by elevated blood sugars. These changes can be the result of the blood vessels swelling and leaking or new blood vessels growing on the surface of the back of the eye that may result in vision loss or blindness.

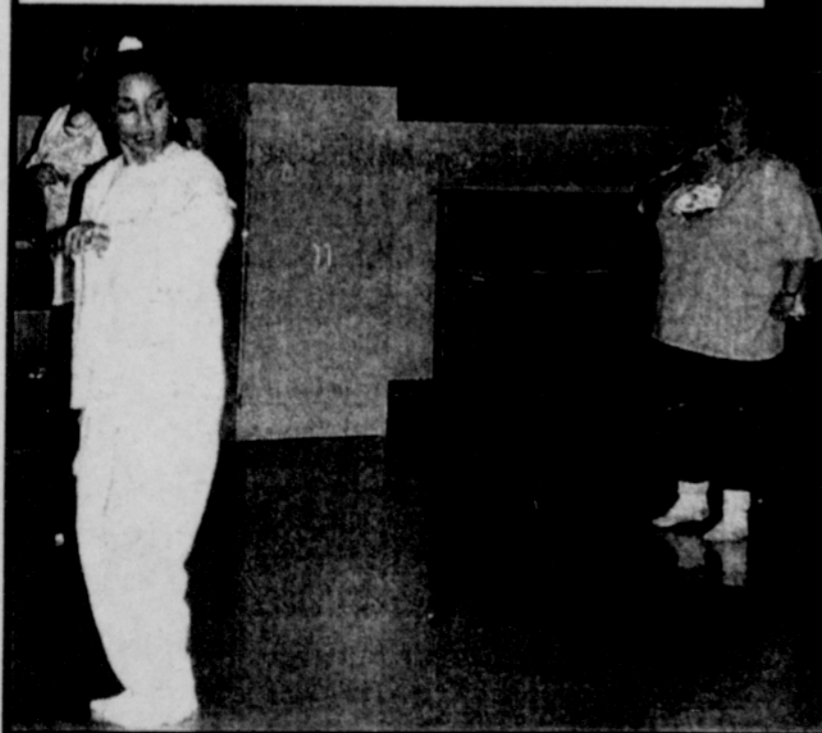
How do you know if you might have this disease? Usually, there's nothing in the disease's early stages that might tell you that you're having vision problems. Your vision may not change until the problem becomes severe, nor is there any pain. Your vision may become blurred and change when blood starts leaking into the back of your eye. This is why regular eye examinations for people with diabetes are so important.

The longer that your blood sugars are out of control, the more likely you are to develop diabetic eye disease. Both the ADA and IHS recommend that your target blood sugar should be 90 to 130 fasting, 110 to 150 two or more hours after a meal, and your target A1c less than 7 percent.

You can't totally prevent diabetic eye disease, but you can greatly reduce its progression and severity by controlling your blood sugars and getting an annual dilated eye examination. An added benefit of improved blood sugar control in individuals with type 2 diabetes is the reduced risk of developing kidney disorders and nerve damage (especially in the feet).

So for your sake, the sake of your family, and for those of us who care about you, please call to make an appointment with an ophthalmologist or optometrist, and keep it. And don't forget to make an appointment with our diabetes educator for help in understanding and controlling your blood sugars.

Shannon Mokuahi Rackowski from Fitness Prescription leads Laura Bremner (behind Shannon) and Selina Kissinger through some steps (below), and Liz John practices her moves (right) during twice-a-week hula classes at the Siletz Tribal Community Center. Several tribal members also are working out at Curves for Women in Newport (see photos on page 17). The tribal diabetes program is sponsoring both activities.



Next issue:

**A firsthand look at
the benefits of
exercise**

We are starting our popular 100 Mile Club Walking Program!

A regular walking program provides many health benefits and is an exercise just about everyone can do

We will each work toward walking 100 miles over 16 weeks between
MARCH 1 & JUNE 21, 2002

We'll have special rewards
to inspire you!

Contact one of the following staff members to register and receive your 100 Mile Club Information Packet:

Siletz Area: Laura Bremner
541-444-9671

Eugene Area: Miranda Strong
541-484-4234

Salem Area: Rose Kunkel
503-390-9494

Portland Area: Joann Brown
503-238-1512

Sponsored by the
Community Health Department
and the Indian Health Service
Diabetes Program