

Diabetes & Aging...



THE MEDICAL TEAM, INC.
Amy Champagne, BSN, RN

Diabetes is a serious chronic disease that causes more deaths a year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. According to the American Federation for Aging, the incidence of diabetes increases progressively with age. In the United States, 23% of adults aged 60 and older have diabetes. In Louisiana, 7.4 out of every 100 adults have diabetes, ranking it 10th highest in the nation for the ratio of people with diabetes in the general population. Furthermore, 42.1 out of every adult 100,000 deaths in Louisiana are due to diabetes, making Louisiana the #1 state with highest rate of deaths from diabetes in the U.S.

Diabetes is caused by high levels of glucose (sugar) in the bloodstream. Glucose is vital to your health because it is the main source of energy for the cells that make up your muscles and tissues, but too much glucose can damage blood vessels and nerves and lead to serious health problems such as blindness, amputations, kidney failure, high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, digestive and nerve problems, gum disease and depression.

Fortunately, having diabetes does not mean that a person must have poor health. "It is poorly controlled diabetes that leads to serious health conditions. Most complications are preventable with positive lifestyle changes. With proper diet, exercise, medical follow-up, and medication when needed, persons can be healthier and feel better than they have in years," says Catherine Guilbeau, RN, Certified Diabetic Educator, THE MEDICAL TEAM.

Nutrition

Proper nutrition helps to ensure effective diabetes management. Eating healthy carbohydrates (carbs) is a step in the right direction since carbs are the fuel source for the

body's cells. To reap the benefits of carbohydrates, choose whole grain carbohydrates over refined carbohydrates and natural sugars over added sugars. Natural sugars are present in fruits, milk, and non-starchy vegetables. Added sugars are commonly found in sweets, desserts, and sugary beverages, which provide empty and often unwanted calories. Whole grain carbs are digested at a slower rate, which may assist with weight management due to an increase in satiety level (fullness). Whole grains may also contribute to better blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels. Look for foods that are labeled as 100% whole grain to help you identify healthy whole grain food sources.

Use the chart on the next page to help choose healthier carbohydrates.

Exercise

Getting active and staying active for at least 30 minutes a day is another important element in diabetes management since exercise helps to:

- Improve the body's use of insulin;
- Burn excess body fat (decreased body fat results in improved insulin sensitivity);
- Improve muscle strength;
- Increase bone density and strength;
- Lower blood pressure;
- Protects against heart and blood vessel disease by lowering "bad" LDL cholesterol and increasing "good" HDL cholesterol;
- Improves blood circulation and reduces the risk of heart disease; and
- Reduces stress.

The best forms of exercise are strength training and aerobic fitness. Finding ways to be active doing enjoyable things such as gardening, walking with friends or playing tennis is a great way to incorporate exercise into your lifestyle.

Are You at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes?

Have your blood glucose level tested if you have 2 or more of these risk factors:

1. Diagnosis of pre-diabetes
2. Overweight ≥ 30 pounds overweight or body mass index (BMI) ≥ 25
3. Family history of diabetes
4. Hispanic, African, Asian, Native American or Pacific Islander heritage
5. Over 30 years old and overweight or over age 45
6. History of gestational diabetes during a pregnancy earlier in life
7. Inactive lifestyle
8. High blood pressure (140/90 or higher)
9. Abnormal cholesterol levels
10. Diagnosis of polycystic ovary disease

Warning Signs of Diabetes

Warning signs or symptoms of diabetes include; excessive thirst or hunger, frequent urination, extreme weakness or fatigue, infections, cuts or sores that are slow to heal, blurred vision, tingling or numbness in feet or hands, frequent skin, gum, urinary or yeast infections, impotence or low energy. It is best to make an appointment to see your doctor if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

THE MEDICAL TEAM offers a Diabetes Self-Management and Education Program to help patients with diabetes maintain normal blood glucose levels and to prevent complications from their diabetes. Developed by staff Certified Diabetes Educators and Registered Dietitians, the program is based on the latest standards of the American Diabetes Association. Teaching incorporates proven educational protocols and emphasizes the development of self-care management skills. The company also offers outpatient diabetes education centers at our Houma, LA and San Antonio, TX locations. These centers have been granted recognition from the American Diabetes Association and the programs meet National Standards for Excellence in Diabetes Self-Management and Education. For more information go to www.medicalteam.com/diabetes.

Sources: *The American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org)*, *WebMD Diabetes Guide (www.webmd.com)* and from

THE MEDICAL TEAM's Diabetes Self-Management Education Program patient handbook.



Healthier Carbohydrates	Carbohydrates To Avoid
Whole Grain Carbs / Natural Sugars	Refined Carbs / Added Sugars
Products With First Ingredient Listed As Whole Wheat, Whole Grain, Whole Oats, Whole Rye	Products With First Ingredients Listed As Unbleached Wheat Flour, Enriched Wheat Flour, Honey Wheat, Multigrain
Whole Wheat Bread	White Bread
Brown Rice	White Rice
Whole Wheat or Whole Grain Pasta	White Pasta
Whole Wheat Rolls or Buns	White Rolls or Buns
Whole Wheat Cereals	Sugar Coated Cereals or Enriched Cereals (Corn Flakes)
Popcorn (plain)	Pretzels
Fresh Fruit	Sweets/Desserts
Canned Fruit, (Water or Juice Packed)	Canned Fruit, (Syrup Packed)
Milk	Ice Cream, Frozen Yogurt, or Sherbet

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