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MAY 2020 Health & Wellbeing Newsletter



Diabetes Prevention Awareness

Could you or someone close to you be living with an undiagnosed case of diabetes?

New figures show that there are 3.8 million people living with a diagnosis of diabetes in the UK, of which 90% of those have type 2 diabetes.

However, according to Diabetes UK there are almost 1 million more people living with type 2 diabetes unaware as they haven't been diagnosed.

Symptoms of type 2 diabetes can include excessive thirst, tiredness, unintentional weight loss and blurred vision.

Whilst being overweight is not the only cause of developing type 2 diabetes, it is the single greatest risk for developing the condition. Many cases of type 2 diabetes could be prevented or delayed simply by adopting some healthy lifestyle choices. A simple finger-tip blood test is all that is needed to help to identify a person's risk factor by measuring their blood glucose levels.

Diabetes statistics:

- 1 in 10 people in the UK aged 40+ now have type 2 diabetes.
- By 2030 more than 5 million people will be diagnosed with diabetes.
- Being overweight or obese can contribute up to 85% of your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- South Asian and black people are two to four times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes than white people.
- More than 500 people with diabetes die prematurely every week.

(Source: Diabetes UK)

5 Tips to reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes

1. Reduce your intake of sugar and refined carbs.

Eating sugary foods and refined carbohydrate can put at-risk individuals on the fast track to developing diabetes. Your body rapidly breaks these foods down into small sugar molecules which are absorbed into your bloodstream. The resulting rise in blood sugar stimulates your pancreas to produce insulin, a hormone that helps sugar get out of the bloodstream and into your body's cells. In people with prediabetes, the body's cells are resistant to insulin's action, so sugar remains high in the blood. To compensate, the pancreas produces more insulin, attempting to bring blood sugar down to a healthy level. Over time, this can lead to progressively higher blood sugar and insulin levels, until the condition eventually turns into type 2 diabetes.

2. Exercise Regularly

Performing physical activity on a regular basis may help prevent diabetes. Exercise increases the insulin sensitivity of your cells so when you exercise, less insulin is required to keep your blood sugar levels under control.

3. Avoid sedentary behaviours.

To reduce the risk of developing diabetes it is important to avoid being seated all day. Observational studies have shown a consistent link between sedentary behaviour and the risk of diabetes. Changing sedentary behaviour can be as simple as standing up from your desk and walking around for a few minutes every hour.

4. Eat foods high in fibre.

Getting plenty of fibre is beneficial for gut health and weight management. Studies in obese, elderly and prediabetic individuals have shown that it helps keep blood sugar and insulin levels low. Fibre can be divided into two broad categories: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibre absorbs water, whereas insoluble fibre does not. In the digestive tract, soluble fibre and water form a gel that slows down the rate at which food is absorbed. This leads to a more gradual rise in blood sugar levels. However, insoluble fibre has also been linked to reductions in blood sugar levels and a decreased risk of diabetes, although exactly how it works is not clear.

5. Minimise your intake of processed foods.

One clear step you can take to improve your health is to minimise your consumption of processed foods. They're linked to all sorts of health problems, including heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Studies suggest that cutting back on packaged foods that are high in vegetable oils, refined grains and additives may help reduce the risk of diabetes. This may be partly due to the protective effects of whole foods like nuts, vegetables, fruits and other plant foods.