



National Diabetes Month



According to the American Diabetes Association more than 37 million children and adults are diagnosed with diabetes in the US. It is estimated that 29% of people over the age of 65 have diabetes. Even though you may not have diabetes, it is likely that you know someone who does. Raising awareness of diabetes and understanding how it is treated can help a loved one in need or help to prevent serious health complications.

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas to control blood sugar levels. For people with diabetes, their pancreas does not properly produce insulin. This leads to irregular blood sugar levels that can cause serious harm to the body if left untreated. There are three main types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is when the pancreas doesn't produce any insulin. People with type 1 diabetes receive insulin doses regularly throughout their day via an insulin pen or pump. Type 2 diabetes is when the pancreas is able to produce insulin, but not enough for the body to function properly. This is the most common form of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes does not always require insulin and can be regulated with other medications. Prediabetes is the stage before a person develops type 2 diabetes. Early detection of prediabetes as well as some significant lifestyle changes can prevent the development of type 2 diabetes. Finally, gestational diabetes occurs only when a woman is pregnant, but goes away once the baby is born.

Hypoglycemia is when a diabetic patient has low blood sugar. Using the 15-15 rule, diabetic patients can usually bring their blood sugar levels back to a normal range. Take 15 grams of carbs and wait 15 minutes to check your blood sugar levels. They can repeat this process until their blood sugar is back to normal. When diabetes is not well maintained, high blood sugar can start to affect certain functions in the body. Diabetes can affect your vision as well as the nerves in your hands and feet. Diabetes can also lead to serious issues such as a stroke, heart attack, or kidney failure.

People with diabetes need to regularly check their blood sugar throughout the day. They do this using an A1C test. There are lots of ways people with diabetes can maintain or even lower their A1C levels. All diabetes patients should adopt healthy eating and exercise habits to help them manage their blood sugar. Adopting a schedule of at least 30 minutes of exercise a day as well as eating plant-based foods, lean proteins, and limiting carbohydrate intake can lead to a long and healthy life with diabetes.

This information is brought to you by Kittson Healthcare and Kittson Healthcare Public Health. For more information on diabetes awareness, please visit www.diabetes.org.