



How to Avoid the High Cost of Diabetes

The statistics are staggering. 25.8 million people in the United States or 8.3% of the population have diabetes, according to the recent figures by the American Diabetes Association. In various counties of western Pennsylvania the numbers are much higher – up to 12.5% of the population. Further statistics show that diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults aged 20 to 74 years of age, and is also the leading cause of kidney failure.¹ In 2007 alone, diabetes contributed to a total of 231,404 deaths.

The rising cost of this health crisis affects every American. Calculations by The American Diabetes Association show the total costs in 2007 of diagnosed diabetes being \$174 billion in the US. With the population of the US at 302 million that year, the cost of this disease for each American was approximately \$576. This number can only be higher now.

Clearly this is a health crisis that has enormous impacts on society and the healthcare system.

As the most common form of diabetes, millions of Americans have been diagnosed with type 2 or adult onset diabetes, and many more are at risk and unaware, such as an increasing number of the younger population who are overweight. Certain ethnic populations are more susceptible to suffering from type 2 diabetes, such as African Americans, Latinos, Native and Asian Americans, along with the senior population.

Symptoms

In the early stages, people usually have the condition of "pre-diabetes", which are blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet enough to be diagnosed. Because many of the symptoms can at first seem harmless, the onset of type 2 diabetes is often undetected. But as time goes on, symptoms can include²:

- Any of the type 1 diabetes symptoms; such as frequent urination, extreme thirst or hunger, weight loss and fatigue
- Frequent infections
- Blurred vision
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling or numbness in the hands and feet
- Recurring skin, gum, or bladder infections

Prevention

¹ http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/diabetes-statistics/?utm_source=WWW&utm_medium=DropDownDB&utm_content=Statistics&utm_campaign=CON

² http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/symptoms/?utm_source=WWW&utm_medium=DropDownDB&utm_content=Symptoms&utm_campaign=CON

As with every disease, early detection and lifestyle changes can decrease the chance of developing complications. The Diabetes Prevention Program has shown that diet and exercise is the best prevention. Luckily, you can stop the onset of type 2 diabetes with a healthy lifestyle that includes the following:

- Consume foods that help control sugar levels, and not those that allow it peak. Avoid salt, red meat, trans/saturated fat, and refined (processed) carbohydrates such as sugar and sodas, white bread, cookies, pasta, chips and pastries. Instead, opt for whole grain foods such as brown rice, quinoa, oats, bran muffins, high protein foods, and fresh fruit and vegetables, balanced throughout the day.
- Get enough fibre, by aiming for 25 to 30 grams each day. Include high fibre foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes.
- Increase your level of physical activity. The American Diabetes Association states, *“Just 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity, coupled with a 5-10% reduction in body weight, produced a 58% reduction in diabetes”*.³ The experts agree - exercise is the BEST way to control blood glucose levels and cardiovascular disease -- the top killers of diabetics.
- Quit smoking and decrease your consumption of alcohol.

With these positive lifestyle habits, you can stay healthier longer and are more likely to stay free of this escalating disease. It's never too late to avoid the onset of type 2 diabetes.

This article is written by Philips LIFELINE, the largest Personal Emergency Response Service program in Western Pa. This program delivers extraordinary service to nine counties and offers the cutting-edge **Auto Alert** -- which automatically detects falls, provides peace of mind and assists people with living independently longer. Contact Bob Gordon at 412-779-0696 or Toll Free 866-677-7795.

³ <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/pre-diabetes/how-to-prevent-pre-diabetes.html>