Ask the Expert

What should I know about diabetes?

How do I know if I'm at risk for diabetes?

Type 2 Diabetes has several risk factors. Some can be controlled while others can not.

Risk factors we cannot control include age - over 40, gender - men are more likely than women to have undiagnosed diabetes due to not visiting doctor regularly, and family history of diabetes. Ethnicity also can be a risk factor. African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans are at a greater risk.

Risk factors we can control are physical activity and weight. The more of these risk factors you have the more at risk for developing Type 2 Diabetes you are.

Does eating too much sugar cause diabetes?

This is a trick question. Eating sugar does not cause diabetes; however, sugar is a very high calorie food. If you are a person who eats a lot of high calorie foods without exercising, then your weight will inevitably go up. Being overweight is a direct risk factor for diabetes.

Research has also shown that a diet high in sugary drinks is linked to Type 2 Diabetes. Sugary drinks include regular soft drinks, Gatorade, energy drinks, lemonade or Kool-aid, sweet tea, and fruit drinks.

I have diabetes. Should I buy special diabetic foods?

No! The best diet for a diabetic is a diet in which a healthy amount of carbohydrates is eaten.

Carbohydrates are the bodies main source of energy. There are three main sources of carbohydrates: starches, sugars, and fibers.

A general guide for a diabetic is for women to eat 30-45g of carbohydrates per meal and 15g per snack; men should eat 45-60g per meal and 15-30g per snack.

Diabetes education classes are available to help teach carbohydrate counting along with individualized meal planning.

My doctor wants to start insulin. Does this mean I failed to take care of my diabetes?

Not necessarily. Diabetes is a progressive disease. A diabetic can contribute to the progression of the disease by not controlling blood sugars.

Sometimes however, the disease progresses more

rapidly even though a patient is doing the self management behaviors they are taught like watching their diet and exercising.

These are the two things we have control of and are also the two most contributory factors in controlling blood sugar. The best things we can do to keep our blood sugar in control are exercise 4-5 days per week and eat a healthy carbohydrate diet.

Remember insulin is a medication just like any other diabetes medication. If it was available in a pill form, we would give it that way. Unfortunately it can only be given as an injection currently. You should always take the medication prescribed by your doctor, exactly like they tell you to take it.

For more information about NEA Baptist Clinic – Diabetes Center visit NEABaptistClinic.com



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