



Huntsville Memorial Hospital

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Huntsville Memorial Hospital News Release

For Immediate Release

April 6, 2007

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OBESITY, INACTIVITY CAUSE NEAR EPIDEMIC IN DIABETES

Lifestyle Changes a Matter of Education and Moderation

(Huntsville, Texas) – According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes is nearing epidemic proportions because of the increasing frequency of obese and inactive lifestyles. In addition, there is serious concern that children of obese parents are at much greater risk for adult diabetes if their nutrition and other lifestyle behaviors are not addressed early on.

Once someone is diagnosed with diabetes, his or her lifestyle may need to be modified to help prevent complications. This applies to both adults and children, especially those with genetic factors such as obesity in the family, to help prevent the onset of adult diabetes. It's a matter of education and moderation.

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for everyday life. In addition to your doctor's prescribed care, the main keys to managing diabetes are proper nutrition and a regular exercise program so that you can help control your blood sugar level.

People with diabetes have the same nutritional needs as anyone else. The difference is in understanding the importance of eating the appropriate foods in the right amounts and keeping their weight under control to help manage the disease. One of the first things a diabetic should do is work with a nutritionist or dietitian to create a healthy eating plan that includes variety. They don't necessarily have to avoid their favorite foods.

Good nutrition means eating a daily variety of foods in the four main food groups: fruits and vegetables; whole grains, cereals and breads; dairy products; and meats, fish, poultry, eggs, dried beans and nuts. Diabetics should eat less sugar, which is found in a lot of food that people may not realize, such as alcoholic beverages. In addition, people with diabetes are about twice as likely to have heart disease as most people. Lowering the amount of fat in your diet can help reduce that risk.

Huntsville Memorial Hospital News Release – Page 2

Exercise is also extremely beneficial to the health of diabetics because it helps control blood sugar levels, as well as helps prevent heart disease. The first step toward a more active lifestyle is a check-up with your doctor for a thorough medical exam. Your health care provider can work with you to develop an exercise program that best meets your needs.

Walking seems to be an excellent exercise and choice for many people, while others prefer to swim, jog or take exercise classes. An exercise program is for all ages. If it is difficult to get out, you can do a series of stretches in your home or even while sitting down. You may find that after properly stretching, you have more energy and flexibility than before. In any case, it's always best to check with your doctor first.

Huntsville Memorial Hospital offers diabetic and nutritional counseling to teach you how to manage the disease. This diabetes education program provides you with knowledge so that you remain in control of your life, instead of diabetes controlling you. A dietitian will meet with you to plan a course of action so that you can maintain a high quality of life. Nutritional counseling for diabetes and other disease recovery states is also available with a physician prescription. For more information contact the HMH Clinical Dietitians Stacy Wagner, RDLD, at 291-4525, or Penny Meyers, RDLD, at 291-4239.

To hear about the latest news on prevention and treatment of diabetes, plan to attend "Diabetes: An Epidemic?". This community health lecture will be presented by Dr. Nabeel Khan on April 17 at 6:30 pm in the HMH Conference Rooms. For more information or to make reservations, please call 291-4599.

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