

Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



NOVEMBER 2013

Diabetes - Avoiding Complications

Sweet Success

More than a quarter of Americans 65 and older have Type 2 diabetes and roughly another 50 percent have a condition known as "pre-diabetes." The odds of developing diabetes increase with age, as well as its sometimes life-threatening complications which include dental disease, sexual dysfunction, nerve damage to feet, amputation, heart attack, stroke, visual impairment, and kidney disease. Older adults seek emergency care for blood-sugar crises twice as often as the general diabetes population.

Obesity is a well-known cause of Type 2 diabetes, but a poor diet, lack of exercise, and genetics also contribute.

Most people still do not understand how serious this disease is, and many go undiagnosed until their blood sugar levels are out of control - one reason why diabetes is known as the "silent killer." Even when the risks are known, many people with diabetes still have trouble controlling their blood sugar levels.

Live and Thrive Despite Diabetes

In people with Type 2 diabetes,

either the body doesn't produce enough of the hormone insulin, or cells can't use it properly. Insulin allows the body to use glucose (blood sugar) for energy. The complications of diabetes occur when glucose builds up in the blood and clogs small arteries instead of going into cells. Help the person in your care commit to a 24/7 diabetes treatment plan.

- Know the ABCs - **A1C** levels, (test that gives you a picture of your average blood glucose control for the past two to three months) **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol. Like diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol can damage blood vessels, leading to heart attack or stroke. Encourage the person to work with the doctor to set goals for blood sugar numbers at different times of the day.

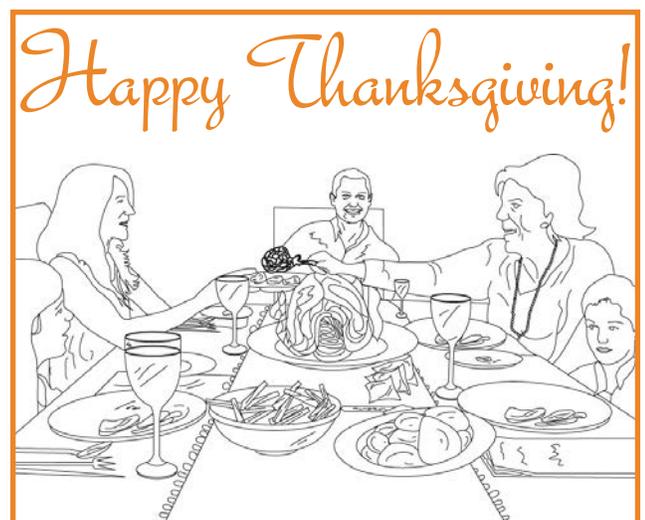
- Smoking increases the risk of diabetes complications. Smokers with diabetes are three times more likely to die of heart disease than nonsmokers with diabetes.

- Yearly physicals to look for signs of kidney

problems, nerve damage and heart disease, as well as other medical problems. During a yearly eye exam, an eye care specialist will check for signs of retinal damage, cataracts and glaucoma.

- Keep vaccines up-to-date. High blood sugar can weaken the immune system, which makes routine vaccines important. Ask about vaccines against flu, pneumonia and hepatitis B.
- Diabetes increases the chance of gum infections. Brush, floss, and schedule dental exams at least twice a year. Consult a dentist if gums bleed or look red or swollen.
- Aspirin reduces the blood's ability to clot, so taking one

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aspirin every day can reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. The doctor will say whether daily aspirin therapy is appropriate for the person in your care.

- Alcohol can cause low blood sugar, so it should be used only

in moderation and always with a meal.

- Work with a dietician to create an eating plan that includes lots of low-glycemic foods, which are less likely to raise blood sugar. A Mediterranean diet rich in fruits,

vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and healthy fats can help.

- Join a diabetes support group to meet other people who are facing the same challenges and discover new ways to stay healthy.

Source: NCOA, Mayo Clinic

Mark Your Calendar!



Remaining Medicare Check-Up Days

Gallia County

December 5th at the Gallia County Council on Aging (Senior Center) in Gallipolis. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

Highland County

November 22nd at the Highland County Senior Center in Hillsboro. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (937) 393-4745.

Jackson County

November 18th at Jackson One Stop Tech and Training Center. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (740) 286-4181, extension 343.

Lawrence County

November 26th at the Southern Branch Library in South Point. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

Ross County

November 15th at the Ross County Senior Center in Chillicothe. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (740) 773-3544.

Vinton County

December 3rd at the Vinton County Senior Center in McArthur. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

DRIVING AND DIABETES

Drivers with diabetes are 12 to 19 percent more likely to have a car accident. Sudden bouts of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) can cause confusion, delayed reaction, visual disturbances, or loss of consciousness. Diabetic drivers have a responsibility to make sure that their blood glucose level is not too low to drive safely. Always check sugar levels before driving and, if low, eat a snack, wait 15 minutes, and check again. This simple precaution can avoid accidents and save lives.



SIMPLIFYING DIABETES CARE

Older diabetics often have a hard time remembering to check blood sugar levels, take pills or administer insulin shots, especially when they also have to manage other health problems. If the person in your care is struggling with complex medication schedules, talk to a doctor about simplifying the routine. In many cases, it may be possible to combine medications or make instructions easier to follow.

EXERCISE 30 MINUTES EACH DAY

Exercise can help control diabetes. If the person in your care has diabetes, the doctor may recommend a complete physical exam and possibly an exercise stress test to determine the safest way to increase physical activity. Whether it's walking, dancing, swimming or strolling, remember—thirty minutes every day is essential for good health.



LIVING WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES PROGRAM

The American Diabetes Association offers a free program for those living with Type 2 diabetes. Enroll and receive valuable information on how to manage diabetes over the following 12 months. The program is available in both English and Spanish. Visit www.diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).

"It is better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers" - James Thurber

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Depression and Diabetes

People with diabetes are at greater risk of depression because hormones produced in response to stress may prevent insulin from working properly. Depression makes it harder to concentrate, keep active, and follow a diabetes management plan. This can make diabetes worse, which then makes depression worse. Make sure you and the person in your care stay positive, take time to laugh and relax, and have plenty of sleep. If you see more than three of the symptoms below, or if “the blues” stick around for two weeks or longer, speak to a health care professional.

- Change in appetite • Trouble concentrating • Nervous or guilty feelings
- Reduced energy/feeling tired • Change in sleeping patterns



Healthy U

Chronic Disease Self-Management Class



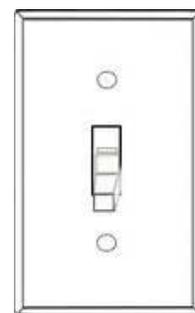
Have a chronic disease such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, or other life-long conditions? Want to better manage your conditions and feel healthier? Put life back into your life with Healthy U! Participants in the Healthy U program will gain needed support in addition to a number of other benefits, including:

- Learning practical ways to deal with pain, fatigue and depression.
- Discovering better ways to be more physically active.
- Learning how to eat healthier.
- Learning better ways to talk with your physician and family about your health.
- Setting personal goals.
- Finding ways to relax and deal with stress.

For more information, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277.

Don't Fall, Be Safe!

Install easy-access light switches at room entrances so you will not have to walk into a dark room to turn on the light. Glow-in-the-dark switches may also be helpful.



Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

These programs will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. You are invited to attend any or all of the programs listed below. Programs are free of charge. No registration required.

Scioto County - Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg from 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
 Remaining Topic: December 10th - Activities and Interaction

Gallia County - 2881 SR 160 (HMC Thaler Building) in Gallipolis from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
 Remaining Topics: November 19th - Safety Considerations • January 28, 2014 - Activities and Interaction



For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

F32-URG, PO Box 500 • 160 Dorsey Drive • Rio Grande, OH 45674-0500

Toll-Free Number: (800) 582-7277 • TTY: 711 (Relay Ohio)

Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Safety Tips - Diabetes and Eye Health

Diabetes raises the risk for eye disease and vision loss. A condition known as diabetic retinopathy occurs when excess blood sugar clogs up the tiny blood vessels in the eye. This can eventually starve the eye of blood and cause vision loss. Have eyes checked yearly, especially because diabetes-related eye problems often have no symptoms in the early stages.

If the person in your care has diabetes, urge them to begin insulin therapy as soon as his or her doctor suggests it. Many people believe that it's better to wait as long as possible before beginning insulin. This can be very dangerous because waiting too long can allow diabetes to cause a lot of damage. Often, insulin injections are the most effective way of preventing diabetes complications such as retinopathy.

If retinal disease does occur, it is often treatable if it's caught in the early stages.

Source: www.realage.com; CDC

