

## Health Benefits Administration

# Your Health... Your Choice

A newsletter providing information to assist our employees and retirees in making informed lifestyle choices to enhance long term health.

## New Health Benefits Director



Effective March 30, Lori Dooks assumed leadership of the Health Benefits Department as I transitioned to retirement with my husband in my home province of New Brunswick. Lori brings with her a strong background in finance, with a business degree, and many years of experience in the health care field. I know Lori will serve you well and with our current staff, Gloria Greer and Almyra Hodder, continue to look after your concerns and provide the assistance and service you have come to expect.

I shall miss our interactions but leave knowing you will be well served.

God bless you and keep well,

*Juanita*

### WHAT IS YOUR LIFETIME RISK FOR DIABETES?

Diabetes is a serious and costly disease. The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes has increased 40 percent in the last 10 years. Based on research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), new estimates suggest that as many as one in three people born recently will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

#### Here are the estimates for people born after 2000:

- Men, 32.8% will develop diabetes in their lifetime
- Women, 38.5%
- Hispanic males, 45.4%
- Hispanic females, 52.5%

As you can see, these odds are not good and the complications of diabetes are serious. These include coronary heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, increased risk of cancer, infections, and dementia. The CDC report further points out that persons diagnosed with diabetes by age 40 will lose 12 to 14 years off their life expectancy, and lose 19 to 22 (men and women respectively) healthy life years.

These findings highlight the importance of setting national priorities for the primary prevention of diabetes and its serious and costly complications. Fortunately, there is much that can be done to prevent or delay the onset of type-2 diabetes. A Diabetes Prevention Program sponsored by the CDC took a large group of people who were already prediabetics and put them on a lifestyle change program one year. This included a healthy eating plan (lower calories and saturated fat, and a higher fiber intake), plus 150 minutes of exercise weekly. On this program they lost five to seven percent of their body weight. They also reduced their risk of developing diabetes by 58 percent compared to a control group that made no changes.

**The Harvard University Nurses' Health Study found that about nine out of 10 cases of diabetes could be avoided by taking these seven simple steps:**

1. **Control your weight.** Being overweight increases your risk of diabetes sevenfold. Losing just 10 to 15 pounds (if you're overweight) can significantly reduce your chances of getting diabetes.

2. **Be more physically active.** Limit TV viewing and other sedentary pursuits. Harvard found that walking briskly for even 30 minutes daily cut the risk of type-2 diabetes by 30 percent, even without weight loss. They also found that for every two hours of TV a person watched daily, the risk of diabetes increased by 20 percent. By choosing more active leisure time activities you greatly improve your health. Try riding a stationary bike when watching your favorite TV program.

3. **Choose whole grains over white bread and other refined grains.**



When Harvard combined the research from both the Nurses' Health Study and the men's Health Professional Follow-up Study (a total of 160,000 people) they found that those who chose more whole grains (at least two to three servings daily) were 30 percent less likely to develop type-2 diabetes during the 18-year study compared to those who ate primarily white bread, white rice, and other refined cereals.

4. **Skip sugary drinks.** Sugar is a high glycemic food that causes the blood sugar to rise rapidly. French fries, white bread, white rice, and refined grains were all linked to higher risks of developing diabetes. For example, in the Nurses' Health Study, women who had one or more sugar-sweetened drinks daily had an 83 percent higher risk of developing type-2 diabetes compared to women who seldom drank sugar-sweetened beverages. Go for water instead of a soft drink.
5. **Choose good fats.** Harvard found that as saturated fat went up in the diet, so did the risk of diabetes. On the other hand, those who chose healthy polyunsaturated fats found in liquid vegetable oils, nuts, nut butters, and seeds actually had a lower risk of developing diabetes. Be sure to avoid all trans fats. These very unhealthy fats are found in many solid margarines, packaged baked goods, fried foods in most fast-food restaurants, and any products that list "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" on the label.
6. **Limit red meat and avoid processed meat.** Red meat and other foods high in cholesterol

raise the risk of type-2 diabetes. In a study of over 440,000 people, Harvard found that eating just three ounces of red meat daily (a serving about the size of a deck of cards) raised the risk of type-2 diabetes by 20 percent. Eating processed meats had an even greater risk. Eating just two slices of bacon, or one hot dog daily raised the risk of diabetes by 51 percent. In the Adventist Health Study that included nearly 90,000 people, researchers found that those who ate a healthy, plant-based diet had only one-fourth the prevalence of diabetes compared to those who ate meat regularly.

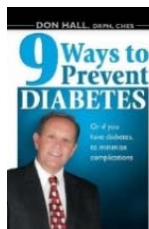
7. **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking significantly increases the risk of developing diabetes.

You can help prevent diabetes or minimize the complications of this disease. Here's how: Stay lean and be active. Choose healthy meals that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Make it a goal to eat more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. And choose foods that are low in sugar and other refined carbohydrates.

#### Sources:

- *The Journal of the American Medical Association*; 290(14):1884-1890.
- National Diabetes Prevention Program. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- *Simple Steps to Preventing Diabetes*. Nutrition Source, Harvard School of Public Health.

#### For more information on preventing diabetes:



Read Dr. Hall's new book, [9 Ways to Prevent Diabetes](#), available at Amazon.com for \$3.49, or as an eBook or Nook Book at Barnes and Noble.

#### EXERCISE - THE ANTI-AGING WEAPON

Regular physical activity promotes healthy aging. Inactivity, on the other hand, worsens almost all diseases and conditions that lead to physical disability. The Archives of Internal Medicine recently devoted their entire journal one month to show the

health benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating for successful aging and general well-being.

The article pointed out that regular physical activity is helpful for preventing or managing osteoarthritis, falls, hip fractures, cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, declining mental ability, and obesity. All of these conditions significantly lower quality of life and raise the risk for independence later in life. Here is a quick summary of 4 of these articles on exercise and aging:

- ✓ **Better health:** In a 15-year study by Harvard on 13,535 women, researchers found that if women were active at midlife their odds for exceptional health at age 70 was significantly better. In this study, anyone who reached age 70 without chronic disease, impairment in cognitive function, or physical disability was considered a successful-aging person. In the study, those women who walked regularly had a 90% increase in their chances of aging successfully compared to those who didn't walk regularly. If they did "very brisk" walking, their odds for successful aging were 2.7 times higher than the non-walkers.
- ✓ **Fracture risk and falls:** In another study, 227 women were assigned to an 18-month exercise program consisting of two 60-minute exercise programs including aerobic, strength, and balance training plus two home-training sessions focused on strength and flexibility. A control group followed a minimal exercise program (one 60-minute session per week of low-intensity activity). After 1.5 years of follow-up, the higher exercise group had half as many fracture incidences compared to the control group. This is very encouraging as falls are a major concern and expense among older women. Interestingly, both groups saw a drop in their 10-year coronary heart disease risk. Even a very moderate increase in activity was beneficial for heart health.



- ✓ **Cognitive impairment:** A third study found that regular physical activity significantly reduced the incidence of cognitive impairment after two years of regular physical activity, compared to a control group with no exercise. The researchers concluded that the regular exercise directly improved blood flow to the brain and even stimulated growth of new blood vessels in the brain, thus improving cognitive ability. What exercise does for the heart also occurs in the brain - both are strengthened in their ability to provide better function.

- ✓ **Quality of life:** The last study looked at exercise and quality of life. Researchers wanted to see if regular exercise produced measurable improvements in the quality of life among people age 65 and older. After 6 months of moderate exercising (doing Tai Chi for 30 minutes 4 times per week) the researchers were able to see an improvement in health-related quality of life issues and activities of daily living (ADL), which included the ability to walk and take care of themselves.

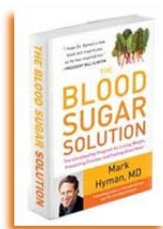
- ✓ **During the same time,** a control group met weekly and talked about ways to improve communication skills, but did no physical activity. They experienced a decline in quality of life issues and ADL (activities of daily living) abilities. The researchers concluded that exercise programs can slow the decline in health-related quality of life that happens with most seniors as they grow older.

What's the bottom line?

If you want to enjoy better health as you grow older, prevent disease, lower your risk of fractures, and improve your quality of life, it is important to maintain an active lifestyle. Starting activity early in life brings the greatest health rewards but starting at any age has significant benefits.

*Source: Duke Medicine HealthNews, May 2010*

## Book Recommendation



### The Blood Sugar Solution

by Mark Hyman, MD

The latest research shows that insulin imbalance is the major cause of weight issues and diabetes, as well as heart disease, cancer, dementia, and most other diseases. You may have it and not know it. In fact more than 100 million Americans suffer from diabetes, the spectrum of imbalance ranging from mild insulin resistance to prediabetes to full-blown type 2 diabetes. By 2020 it will affect 1 in 2 Americans, 90 percent of whom will not be diagnosed. Fortunately, diabetes is reversible, and best selling author Dr. Mark Hyman shows you how.

In *The Blood Sugar Solution*, Dr. Hyman presents his scientifically based program for rebalancing insulin and blood sugar levels. He identifies the seven factors in achieving wellness – peak nutrition, regulated hormones, reduced inflammation, optimized digestion, maximized detoxification, better energy metabolism and – outlines his six-week action plan that gives you the tools to personalize your approach.

## Chef's Corner

### Citrus Salad

- 1 grapefruit, peeled
- 1 orange, peeled
- 1-1/2 quarts of greens
- 1 red onion, sliced thin
- 2 T cider vinegar
- 1 T lime juice
- 1 T grape seed or olive oil
- 1 T water
- 1/4 t ground black pepper
- 1/4 t ground cumin

#### Directions

Cut fruit in bite-size pieces. Toss with lettuce and onion. Mix remaining ingredients for dressing. Drizzle over salad and toss just before serving.

