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DIABETES

Diabetes is a disease that is increasingly diagnosed in this country – many view it as an epidemic. Overall, many Americans don't get enough exercise, have unhealthy diets, are obese, sedentary or smoke. Some people also have genetic predisposition toward diabetes (especially those of Native American and African American descent). Diabetes must be managed well, and should be monitored by an endocrinologist. Technology for treatment improves all the time, and lifestyle changes can make an enormous difference in quality of life and longevity.

Diabetic patients must be regularly checked for heart disease, renal disease and stroke as well; many of the same behaviors and risk factors present for these as well as diabetes. Other than insulin management as directed by your physician, make sure to have your feet and legs checked every time you see your doctor, and have your eyes checked at least once a year. Changes in pulse rates can possibly mean that the circulation is compromised and care must be provided. Vision changes can indicate that the metabolic and insulin levels are in need of adjustment.

I tell many of my patients with diabetes to recognize the disease as a condition that is manageable but also potentially life-threatening, and to do whatever possible to alleviate aggravating the situation. Paying attention to your health and respecting the needs of your body are crucial with this diagnosis. Your physician can provide you with treatment options and put you on a regimen that will maximize your health and minimize the co-occurrence of other diseases.

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are abnormal. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas produces a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our bodies. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood. Diabetes can cause serious health complications, including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure and lower-extremity amputations. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES INCLUDE:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme hunger
- Sudden vision changes
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Extreme fatigue

- Excessively dry skin
- Sores that heal slowly

WHAT ARE THE COMMON TYPES OF DIABETES?

Type 1 diabetes, previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes, may account for 5% to 10% of all diagnosed case of diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes, previously called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-onset diabetes, may account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

Gestational diabetes is a type that some pregnant women get. If not treated, it can cause problems for mothers and babies. Gestational diabetes develops in 2% to 5% of all pregnancies but usually disappears when a pregnancy is over.

Other specific types of diabetes resulting from specific genetic syndromes, surgery, drugs, malnutrition, infections and other illnesses may account for 1% to 2% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR DIABETES?

Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include age, obesity, family history of diabetes, impaired glucose tolerance and a sedentary lifestyle. African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and some Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are at particularly high risk for Type 2 diabetes. Risk factors are less well-defined for Type 1 diabetes than for Type 2 diabetes, but autoimmune, genetic and environmental factors are involved in developing this type of diabetes.

HOW TO WE TREAT DIABETES?

Healthy eating, exercise and insulin injections are the basic therapies and Type 1 diabetes. The amount of insulin taken must be balanced with food intake and daily activities. Blood glucose levels must be closely monitored through frequent testing. Healthy eating, physical activity and blood glucose testing are the basic therapies for Type 2 diabetes. Many people with Type 2 diabetes require oral medication, insulin or both to control their blood glucose levels. People with diabetes must take responsibility for their day-to-day care, and keep blood glucose levels from going too low or too high. People with diabetes should see a health care provider who will monitor their diabetes control and help them learn to manage their diabetes.

Listen to Dr. Galichia's Radio Show – "Take Your Health to Heart" every Saturday from 11 AM to Noon on 1480 KQAM in Wichita. If you have any medically related questions, please call us during the LIVE broadcast at 1-800-TALK-997 or 1-800-825-5997. You can also e-mail your questions anytime to GalichiaRadio@Galichia.com. We would love to hear from you!!!

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