

Sample Newsletter Article #1

Weight Loss & Physical Activity – the Keys for Diabetes Prevention and Health Management

Researchers continue to search for a cure for diabetes but, in the meantime, have made enormous progress in the area of prevention. Evidence shows that both diabetes and its complications – including heart and kidney disease, blindness and amputations – can be prevented or delayed by the daily decisions we make about eating and exercising.

We now know how to identify people who are at high risk for diabetes as well as what they can do to successfully delay or prevent this disease. And for those who have already been diagnosed, research shows that exercise and weight management, and blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, can and do make a difference when it comes to preventing complications.

The Diabetes Prevention Program

This groundbreaking clinical trial of the National Institutes of Health found that people who had pre-diabetes (people whose glucose levels were higher than normal, but not yet high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes) could successfully delay diabetes by losing weight and increasing physical activity levels.

Participants in the study initially focused on reducing total fat, with the goal of losing at least 7 percent of their body weight at a rate of 1-2 pounds per week. If total fat reduction did not help them reach the 7 percent goal within a few weeks, they made additional changes to further decrease total caloric intake. Participants were encouraged to reduce fat and calorie levels gradually, through meal and snack item choices, food preparation techniques and restaurant meal selection. Study participants kept careful records of everything they ate. Weight loss medications were not used.

The exercise goal was at least 150 minutes each week, using activities such as brisk walking. Aerobic activity, such as dancing, cycling or swimming could also count toward the goal, but activities such as using the stairs instead of the elevator – although helpful – could not be included. A maximum of 75 minutes of strength training could also be applied toward the goal. Physical activity was stressed not only for maintaining long-term weight loss, but also as a means of preventing diabetes.

Other studies support the results of the DPP, which found the weight-loss and exercise program helped participants lower their chances of developing diabetes by nearly 60 percent.

Healthy Choices

Given the close link between obesity and type 2 diabetes, it should be no surprise that weight loss and exercise help prevent this disease and its complications. But the really encouraging news is that even moderate lifestyle changes can and do make a significant difference!

Anyone who is interested in losing weight and becoming more active needs to first talk with their health care provider about a safe and effective weight loss and exercise plan and see a registered dietitian for meal-planning advice. It is possible to prevent type 2 diabetes and the complications associated with diabetes!