ON THE HORIZON

DAWN
DAWN MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

“My diabetes diagnosis was a life saver!

Before I was diagnosed from a hospital bed, my life was boring. I weighed 190 pounds. I got winded walking only a few feet. I went to work at a sedentary job and came home so tired I would go to bed.

My diagnosis was a kick in the butt! It forced me to change my diet, to exercise and get off the couch. It forced me to take a look at my life. I started a diabetes and exercise program at my church and I also started walking in the evenings with my sisters.

My weight is now 163 pounds, my goal weight is 140. The DAWN center is a great program in helping me in my goal of getting and staying healthy. I hope to become a lay leader and bring this program to my church and community.”

- Helen Stewart

We would like to acknowledge our partners who are joining DAWN in the fight to control diabetes.

Thank you!

Chandra Higginbotham, MD                    Rossie Gomez, DPM

Out and About in the Community

The DAWN center is on the MOVE! DAWN wants to spread the word about diabetes by educating as many people in the community as we can. DAWN participates in community outreach events and health-related activities all over Houston. If you are interested in DAWN being a part of your next community event, call the DAWN center at 832-393-4055.

Want to be a part of Spotlight? Send in your emails or letters.
The most common vision problem caused by diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of new cases of blindness and low vision in adults aged 20-65. “Retinopathy” is a general term that describes damage to the retina. The retina is a thin, light-sensitive tissue that lines the inside surface of the eye. Diabetic retinopathy occurs when there is damage to the small blood vessels that nourish tissue and nerve cells in the retina.

**Symptoms of diabetic retinopathy can include:**

- Blurred or double vision
- Flashing lights, which can indicate a retinal detachment
- A veil, cloud, or streaks of red in the field of vision, or dark or floating spots in one or both eyes, which can indicate bleeding
- Blind or blank spots in the field of vision

**What can you do to prevent diabetic retinopathy?**

- Control your blood sugar levels
- Control your blood pressure levels
- Get a yearly eye exam
Association Between Gum Disease and Diabetes

Emerging research suggests that the relationship between serious gum disease and diabetes is a two-way street. Not only are people with diabetes more susceptible to serious gum disease, but serious gum disease may have the potential to affect blood glucose control and contribute to the progression of diabetes. People with diabetes are at a higher risk for oral health problems, such as gingivitis (an early stage of gum disease) and periodontitis. People with diabetes are also at an increased risk for serious gum disease because they are generally more susceptible to bacterial infection and have a decreased ability to fight bacteria that invade the gums.

If your blood glucose levels are poorly controlled, you are more likely to develop serious gum disease and lose more teeth than non-diabetics. Like all infections, serious gum disease may be a factor in causing blood sugar levels to rise and may make diabetes harder to control.

Other oral problems associated with diabetes include:

- **Thrush** – an infection caused by fungus that grows in the mouth
- **Dry mouth** – which can cause soreness, ulcers, infections and cavities

**Preventing Dental Problems Associated with Diabetes**

First and foremost, control your blood glucose level. Then, take good care of your teeth and gums, along with regular checkups every six months. To control thrush, a fungal infection, maintain good diabetic control, avoid smoking and remove and clean dentures daily. Good blood glucose control can also help prevent or relieve dry mouth caused by diabetes.
High blood glucose levels over time can lead to increased deposits of fatty materials on the insides of the blood vessel walls. These deposits may affect blood flow, increasing the chance of clogging and hardening of blood vessels.

**So what does this mean?**

That if you have diabetes, you are at least twice as likely as someone who does not have diabetes to have heart disease or a stroke. People with diabetes also tend to develop heart disease or have strokes at an earlier age than other people.

**Why is this?**

Because if you are middle-aged and have type-2 diabetes, some studies suggest that your chance of having a heart attack is as high as someone without diabetes who has already had one heart attack. People with diabetes who have already had one heart attack run an even greater risk of having a second one.

In addition, heart attacks in people with diabetes are more serious and more likely to result in death.

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**Diabetic Neuropathy**

Nerve damage from diabetes is known as diabetic neuropathy. Some nerve damage is unnoticeable because it affects internal organs such as our intestines, heart, and sex organs but other nerve damage is very noticeable. Pain, tingling, and loss of feeling are common symptoms of nerve damage, and occur in the hands, arms, feet and legs. This problem happens most often in people who have had diabetes for a long time and have had problems controlling their blood sugars.

Causes of nerve damage can be a combination of factors such as: high blood glucose, duration of diabetes, abnormal blood fat levels, damaged blood vessels, inflammation of nerves, lifestyle factors such as drinking and smoking. A good way to prevent nerve damage or slow down its progress is simply to do your best to maintain your blood sugars within or as closest to normal levels, eat healthy and nutritious meals, and get 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least 5 times per day. Also be sure to visit your doctor regularly and discuss any symptoms you may be experiencing, take all medications as prescribed, and have your feet checked at least once a year by your doctor or podiatrist specializing in diabetic foot care.
The relationship between diabetes and depression is not as uncommon as we think. Just like denial, depression can begin a dangerous cycle of emotions. If you are depressed and have no energy, chances are you will find such tasks as regular blood sugar testing too much. If you feel so anxious that you can’t think straight, it would be hard to keep up with a good diet or you may lose your appetite. Of course, this will affect your blood sugar levels. Spotting depression is the first step. Getting help is the second.

If you are feeling symptoms of depression, such as general irritability, inability to concentrate, anxiety, trouble making decisions, and etc, don’t keep them to yourself. First, talk them over with your doctor. There may be a physical cause for your depression. Poor control of diabetes can cause symptoms that look like depression. During the day, high or low blood sugar may make you feel tired or anxious. Low blood sugar levels can also lead to hunger and overeating. If you have low blood sugar at night, it could disturb your sleep. If you have high blood sugar at night, you may get up often to urinate and then feel tired during the day.

Studies show that people with diabetes have a greater risk of depression than people without diabetes and there is no clear reason why, but getting help as soon as possible and keeping blood glucose, and cholesterol levels close to normal can help prevent or delay further problems.

By Shanice Gowans

For people with type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, physical activity is absolutely essential for improving overall heart health. So when it comes to exercise it’s important to know the two best types of exercise:

- **Aerobic training (walking, biking, jogging)**
- **Resistance training (Weight lifting)**

Aerobic training is a good way to improve your lung capacity and strengthen your heart. Moderate exercise such as walking for 30 minutes a day has been proven to protect against insulin resistance and heart complication.

Resistance training enhances muscular strength and endurance. For people with type-2 diabetes, this type of training increases blood pressure more so than aerobic, but it decreases your heart rate which results in greater blood flow and less work performed by the heart. If you have heart disease, moderate training actually may be a safer activity than most high-intensity aerobic ones.

If you are looking to participate in any form of physical activity, it is important to practice safety and use correct form when exercising.

For more information, stop by the DAWN Center and ask for me!

Your friendly Personal Trainer,

Caleb Boutte

Depression & Diabetes

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Diabetes and Kidney Disease
By Donyell Kelly

The leading cause of kidney disease is diabetes. The damage can occur over many years without a person feeling any different. Type-1 and type-2 diabetes can both cause kidney disease. Diabetes contributes to high blood sugar levels, which damage small blood vessels, including those in the tiny filters in the kidney. Once these blood vessels are damaged, they are unable to filter blood like they should. When blood is not filtered properly, waste products build up in the blood. The waste products may cause you to retain fluid, and experience nausea and vomiting.

Because kidney damage can take place over years without symptoms, the best way to learn if you have kidney issues is to have a sample of your urine checked once a year. A microalbumin test can reveal whether your kidneys are leaking protein (also called albumin). If your test reveals protein in the urine, your doctor will repeat the test to confirm the results. Additional blood tests and urine tests may be required, such as comparing the amount of protein with the amount of another compound, creatinine. (Creatinine is a waste product from protein and muscles in the body)

There are several things one can do to protect their kidney health, such as keeping blood glucose and blood pressures levels in target range, lose weight if needed, and continue to take your medications. In addition, watch out for your kidneys when having X-rays done, because the dye can harm the kidneys. Also, if you have pain or burning during urination, a frequent urge to urinate, cloudy or reddish urine, nausea, a fever, or discomfort in your back or your side below the ribs, you may have an infection in your bladder or kidneys. This can cause damage to your kidneys if left untreated, so you should notify your physician immediately.

DAWN Members participated in a Chair Volleyball Tournament on Friday, August 26, 2016.

Two teams of nine players went on to the finals and fiercely rallied for the deciding point resulting in a 25 to 24 victory for the winning team.

[Images of DAWN members participating in the volleyball tournament]
Be an ACTIVE manager of your HEALTH!

By Catherine Shepard

People with diabetes should see their healthcare providers every 3 months to ensure proper monitoring of their health. Unfortunately, the average doctor visit may last only 10 to 15 minutes, which is nearly not enough time to cover all concerns; therefore it is really important to make good use of that time. A productive appointment is achieved by taking the time to know what to expect and to prepare for it in advance.

Be Proactive and Prepared

- Get a notebook and keep a log of the following:
  - Daily blood glucose levels
  - Daily food diary/meal plan
  - Changes in your physical and mental well-being
  - Questions and concerns to be discussed at your next visit
- Prepare an updated list of all your medications and supplements.
- Discuss important concerns with your physician.

What to expect

- Your weight and blood pressure will be checked
- Your doctor will examine your legs, feet, and between toes
- You will be asked about tobacco or alcohol use and your diet and physical activities
- You will be ask about stress, coping, and mental well-being
- Your doctor will review your records from past exams and go over your health goals

Every Three Months

- Your physician should test your A1C (a 3 month average of your blood sugar levels). An A1C of 6 percent and lower indicates good blood sugar control and anything higher than 7 percent signals poor blood sugar control.

Every Year you should have

- Complete physical examination
- Foot exam and possible referral to a podiatrist
- Diabetic eye exam
- Urine test to check for kidney damage
- Cholesterol tests to check for heart disease
- Yearly immunizations like the flu vaccine

For more tips of how to maximize your doctor visits and better manage your diabetes, call or stop by the DAWN center today!