

Cutting Your Risk for Diabetes

A Fact Sheet from: Cornell Cooperative Extension-Onondaga County

As obesity rates rise, so to do the rates for Type 2 Diabetes. Unfortunately an epidemic of Type 2 diabetes is now being evidenced- not only in adults, but for children and adolescents as well. According to research from Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, an estimated 16 million Americans have diabetes; one-third are completely unaware of it.

There is good news in that the risk for developing Type 2 Diabetes can be cut to almost zero for adults if the appropriate lifestyle behaviors are adopted. Encouraging results of research conducted with middle-aged women recommends:

Lose weight if you are overweight: Women who are overweight are eight times more likely and obese women twenty times more likely to develop diabetes than are lean women.



Engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Women who engage in at least seven hours of cumulative exercise each week (brisk walking, heavy gardening or housework or other activities vigorous enough to work up a sweat) have a 30 percent lower risk than do women who exercise less than half an hour a week.

Eat whole grain breads and cereals to replace refined breads, cereals and sugary foods. Women who eat the most high-fiber cereals and breads as a replacement for refined carbohydrate foods (sweets, potatoes and white-flour products) and who consume the most unsaturated fat to replace saturated and "trans" fats have half the risk.



Eat more fruits and vegetables generally. Generally the five a day recommendations are the minimum amount we should consume daily. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating pattern study, supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, recommends increasing the five-a-day recommendations to seven-to-ten a day to benefit from the antioxidant, micro-nutrient and phytochemical benefits that produce offers.

On another positive note, exercise will cut the risk for diabetes even if you never lose a pound.

For more information on diabetes, visit: <http://www.diabetes.org/professional.htm>

Excerpts from reports in the New England Journal of Medicine 345:790, 2001 and Nutrition Action Health Letter, May and December, 2001

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