

ShowMe Health

Subject: Diabetes Alert Day

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Sound the alert — are you or a loved one at risk for diabetes?

This March 24th, American Diabetes Alert Day is a one-day, “wake-up” call to inform the American public about the seriousness of diabetes. The American Diabetes Association encourages people to take the Diabetes Risk Test and find out if they, or their loved ones, are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

Why is Diabetes Alert Day important?

- 23.6 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes
- Nearly one-quarter of those do not know they have diabetes
- One in five Americans is at risk for developing type 2 diabetes

For many, diagnosis may come seven to ten years after the onset of the disease. Therefore, early diagnosis is critical to successful treatment and delaying or preventing some of its complications such as heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, stroke, amputation and death.

Everyone should be aware of the risk factors for type 2 diabetes. People who are overweight, under active (living a sedentary lifestyle), and over the age of 45 should consider themselves at risk for the disease. African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and people who have a family history of the disease are at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes.

To help people better recognize their own risk for type 2 diabetes, the ADA encourages the public to take the Diabetes Risk Test which requires users to answer simple questions about

weight, age, family history and other potential risk factors for diabetes. The test shows users whether they are at low, moderate or high risk for diabetes. If they are at high risk, they are encouraged to schedule an appointment with their healthcare provider. You can pick up a copy of the risk test at the health center, or visit www.diabetes.org/alert.

Glucose, or blood sugar, screenings are available at the Livingston County Health Center by appointment for a nominal fee of \$5.00. This is only a screening, and does not give you a diagnosis of diabetes or take the place of a complete screening by your physician. But, it can give you an idea if you are in need of further medical testing.

Preventing diabetes, or finding out you have it as soon as possible if you do get it, gives you the best chance to enjoy good health. If diagnosed, a person should immediately begin work with their physician or diabetes specialist to control their diabetes with the goal of preventing complications.

Let's face it. It can be a scary thing when your doctor gives you the diagnosis of diabetes. Most people know diabetes cannot be cured. But, the good news is...diabetes can be controlled. Diabetes is considered a self-managed disease, meaning: you are the most important person in managing your diabetes. Once diagnosed, it is important that you don't let diabetes control your life.

You can do that by becoming educated on how you can best manage your diabetes. Through your health care "team", which can include your physician, a Certified Diabetes Educator like myself, and support services like LCHC's Diabetes News educational newsletter; our support group meetings, individual or group educational sessions, books and periodicals-you can learn a lot of what you need to live a happy, healthy, normal life with the diagnosis of diabetes.

For more information on managing your condition, visit our Diabetes Support Group meeting on the second Tuesday of even months at the Chillicothe Senior Citizen's Center. We meet after lunch at 1:00 p.m.-our next meeting is April 14th. At this meeting you will most always learn something new, or at least reinforce something you already knew. Plus, it's fun! See you there!

All services of the Livingston County Health Center are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.