



CHCHD News

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November is American Diabetes Month, Are You at Risk?

Chattanooga, TN – The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department urges everyone to take a few minutes to find out if they are at risk for type 2 diabetes, which is the most common form of diabetes according to the American Diabetes Association.

"Understanding the risk factors and knowing your family history can help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes," said Jill Heine, public health educator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. Who is at risk of developing type 2 diabetes?

- People over age 45
- People with a family history of diabetes
- People who are overweight
- People who do not exercise regularly
- People with low HDL cholesterol or high triglycerides, high blood pressure
- Certain racial and ethnic groups (Non-Hispanic Blacks, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaska Natives)
- Women who had gestational diabetes, or who have had a baby weighing 9 pounds or more.

Take the diabetes risk test at diabetes.org/risktest to assess your risk. Once you have determined your risk, you can make changes to improve or maintain a healthy lifestyle.

"There are several things you can do," said Heine. "Work towards maintaining a reasonable weight. If you are not sure what your weight should be, use a BMI calculator <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/> to guide you," Heine recommended. Healthy lifestyle changes include:

- Limit the amount of calories you consume each day
- Reduce portion sizes of your meals to help you consume fewer calories
- Eat more vegetables and fruits and reduce the sizes of main dishes such as meats and fuller fat items
- Strive to get 30 minutes of physical activity each day

"Choose something that you enjoy and make sure you are working to a point where you are breathing harder than normal and your body temperature is warmer. Set realistic goals when it comes to weight loss; for example, aim to lose 1-2 pounds per week, or set a long term goal to reduce body weight by 5 to 10 percent," said Heine.

- When choosing a protein or meat, remember that baking, broiling or grilling is a healthier option than frying
- Eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner with small 100-200 calorie snacks in between
- Keep a daily food diary and log your physical activity to help you stay on track

"It is important to remember that any change in behavior takes a considerable amount of time, effort, patience, and determination," said Heine. For more information on diabetes prevention, visit our website at www.health.hamiltontn.org.

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