

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients About Diabetes

As American Diabetes Month, November is dedicated to raising awareness and educating the public about diabetes. Why is this so important? Diabetes currently affects 25.8 million people, 8.3% of the U.S. population. Of this population 18.8 million people have been diagnosed, whereas the other 7.0 million people are unaware of their disease. Also, 79 million people have pre-diabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower limb amputations, and new cases of blindness. In addition, diabetes is associated with complications such as diabetic neuropathy (tingling or pain in the feet), loss of vision, and kidney and/or heart disease. Early detection and treatment are essential for controlling the symptoms of diabetes and preventing complications.

What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a condition that exists before a person develops Type 2 diabetes, when their blood test results are higher than normal, but not high enough to be in the diabetic range. Upon waking or fasting, normal blood glucose levels should be between 70 to 99 mg/dl, while after meals blood glucose levels are normally between 70 to 140mg/dl. Also, A1c, a measure of the average blood glucose for the previous three months, can be used to detect prediabetes and should be <6% in people without diabetes. Prediabetes occurs with an A1C between 5.7% and 6.5% or a fasting blood glucose test of 100 mg/dl to 126 mg/dl. As the number of patients affected by diabetes increases, it is important that everyone is educated on lifestyle modifications and healthy living to prevent this debilitating disease. The best thing to do is to stop this disease before it starts.

What is the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children or young adults. It is characterized by the fact that the pancreas makes no insulin, a hormone needed for the body to utilize energy from sugar, starches, and other foods. These patients must administer insulin injections and will continue this therapy throughout their lives.

Type 2 diabetes is usually diagnosed in older adults. With this type, the pancreas may still make some insulin, but it is not sufficient for the patient's body. These patients do not necessarily have to be on insulin. However, if their diabetes is uncontrolled, they may end up being on insulin. Also, Type 2 diabetes can be prevented, whereas Type 1 cannot.

How can I decrease my risk for developing Type 2 diabetes?

There are two ways to decrease the risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. The first is by making lifestyle changes, such as eating healthy and exercising regularly. It may seem challenging to eat healthy, especially in Louisiana. However, it can be as simple as adding more non-starchy vegetables (such as broccoli, greens, cauliflower, etc...) to a meal and limiting the amount of fried foods that are eaten. Also, exercising regularly, or about 30 minutes 5 days per week, can help decrease this risk.

The second way to decrease the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes is to schedule regular check-ups with a physician and have them check important lab values, such as A1c and/or fasting blood glucose. This is especially important if diabetes is a part of the family history.

How can my pharmacist help me?

A pharmacist is the most accessible healthcare professional and can also be an important part of the healthcare team. They are trained to answer questions and discuss the options for managing diabetes, as well as other disease states. The pharmacist stays in close contact with the physician, not only to come up with a treatment plan, but also to track a patient's progress. In addition to dispensing medications, the pharmacist also provides education on how to take medications properly and checks for harmful drug interactions. Finally, a pharmacist can explain the products that are available and their role in controlling diabetes.

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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