

## Health Link

### Here For You When Your Blood Sugar Rises

Diabetes is a term used to describe a cluster of conditions in which the amount of glucose in the blood is too high. If left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can result in complications like heart or kidney disease, eye disease or even nerve damage.

In Muskoka and surrounding area, it is estimated that 10.5 per cent of the population have been diagnosed with diabetes. But perhaps more startling is the belief that for every diagnosed case of diabetes in the community, there is one undiagnosed case.

And while the number of people affected by the disease continues to climb, complications of diabetes can be delayed and maybe even avoided with the right tools, knowledge and supports.

That's where the local Diabetes Education Programs come in. They are satellite clinics of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, located in Huntsville on the hospital property at the Howland Building, and in Bracebridge at the Archdekin Medical Building.

Consisting of nurses, dietitians, administrative support and a social worker, the health care team at the Diabetes Education Programs provide services to adults with type 1 and 2 and Gestational diabetes.

Their services are tailored to the needs of the client and include a broad range of services to support self management, such as group and individual education, insulin therapy including insulin pumps, and specialized counselling services.

Since their inception in 1993, the Diabetes Education Programs have supported approximately 9,000 clients in Muskoka and surrounding areas.

"The classic signs and symptoms of diabetes, such as increasing thirst, frequent urination, fatigue and blurred vision, are not always apparent," explains registered nurse and diabetes educator Steven James. "People 40 years of age or older should be screened for type 2 diabetes every three years, using a simple

fasting laboratory blood glucose test. Those with additional risk factors should be screened earlier and/or more frequently.”

There are some actions you can take to help reduce your risk of developing, and also manage type 2 diabetes.

“Take care of your body,” says James. “Be active every day. Regular physical activity may help lower your blood glucose levels, and helps promote weight loss, reduce stress and enhance overall fitness.”

Developing a healthy meal plan will also help you control your blood glucose level, says Kim Crichton-Struthers, registered dietitian.

“Eat three meals per day at regular times and have portion sizes that will help you reach or maintain a healthy body weight,” she says. “Limit sugars and sweets and the amount of high fat food you eat and if you’re thirsty, drink water instead of pop or fruit juice.”

“There is support for people living with diabetes,” adds Christine McGuire, registered nurse. “People living with diabetes shouldn’t do it alone. Our Diabetes Education Program is a great resource for all to use.”

More information about the Diabetes Education Programs, including an events calendar, is available at [www.diabetescentre.com](http://www.diabetescentre.com) or by calling the offices at 705-645-8824 or 705-789-2311, ext. 2312.

*Health Link is an awareness column brought to you on behalf of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare.*