



4 South Eagleville Road ♦ Mansfield CT 06268 ♦ Tel: (860) 429-3325 ♦ Fax: (860) 429-3321

Date: 11/1/15

Contact: Ana Zeller, RD, Community Health and Wellness Coordinator
zellerae@ehhd.org
860-429-3361

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
The Eastern Highlands Health District Recognizes
American Diabetes Month

In observation of American Diabetes Awareness Month, The Eastern Highlands Health District is encouraging residents to set health goals and make a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes and diabetes-related complications.

Diabetes is a challenging disease that affects a person's entire life. The hormone insulin helps glucose (sugar) get into the cells of our bodies. The glucose gives the body energy. When someone has diabetes, their body does not make enough insulin or cannot use its own insulin as well as it should. Sugar builds up in the blood instead of being used by the body. If it's not treated, diabetes can cause serious conditions, such as heart disease, blindness and kidney disease. Diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans and an estimated 79 million people are at risk for developing the disease. In Connecticut, diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death.

The good news is that there are lots of ways you can reduce your risk for developing diabetes. Even small changes – such as losing a small amount of weight and becoming more active – can go a long way in preventing type 2 diabetes, as well as managing the disease. Quitting smoking, lowering the amount of alcohol you drink and cutting back on fruit juices, soda and other sugary beverages can have a dramatic impact on your risk for developing the disease as well. If you're trying to reduce the amount of sugary beverages you consume, EHHD suggests reaching for a glass of water flavored with citrus instead of soda, or grabbing a whole orange instead of a glass of orange juice.

Diabetes can affect anyone, so it's important to see your doctor regularly to get the tests and checkups you need to make sure you stay in the clear. Talk with your doctor if you have any common symptoms of diabetes such as frequent urination, increased thirst, cuts that don't heal, or blurry vision. Your doctor will also tell you how your family's history may affect your health, and what you can do to stay as healthy as you can.



4 South Eagleville Road ♦ Mansfield CT 06268 ♦ Tel: (860) 429-3325 ♦ Fax: (860) 429-3321

You can lower your risk by eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, and focusing on foods that don't have any sugar. Foods such as lean protein (fish, poultry and lean red meats) and healthy fats (avocado and olive oil) can help keep your body healthy. Additionally, replacing packaged snack food with fresh options such as a piece of fruit or vegetables dipped in hummus will give your body the nutrients it needs for optimal health. Replacing refined, white flour foods, such as baked goods or white bread, with whole grain and high fiber choices such as whole grain bread and quinoa will give your body the fiber it needs to keep your blood sugar steady and help you stay clear of or manage your diabetes.

“Even if you know what to do to improve your health, figuring out how to do it and fitting it into your daily routine can be a big challenge,” said Director of the Eastern Highlands Health District Robert Miller. “That’s why it’s important to set goals and make a plan to prevent diabetes and its complications.”

Making changes in how you care for your health is a matter of trying and learning. It’s all about choosing a goal and working toward it. Making a plan and taking the first step will help you reach your goal.

1. Think about what is important to your health. What are you willing and able to do?
2. Decide what your goals are. What changes do you want to make? Choose one goal to work on first.
3. Decide what steps will help you reach your goal.
4. Pick one step to try this week.

EHHD’s website has a page dedicated to American Diabetes Month (www.ehhd.org/diabetesawareness-) Here you will find a link to diabetes awareness events happening Connecticut during the month of November, learn more about making a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes, find information on risk factors for diabetes, and access links to delicious and healthy recipes.

Sources for this press release include the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Diabetes Association.