Diabetes Awareness and Prevention

Diabetes is a group of diseases that is characterized by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. There are two basic types of diabetes, Type I and Type II. Nearly 21 million Americans suffer from either Type I or Type II diabetes with the latter being the most prevalent form. Type II diabetes constitutes 90-95% of all diagnosed cases and the amazing fact is that in the majority of cases, this type of diabetes can be prevented and/or controlled with simple lifestyle modifications.

Diabetes prevention and control is vital for the following reasons:

- Diabetes is a leading risk factor for heart disease and heart disease accounts for nearly 65% of all deaths.
- Diabetics are 2 to 4 times more likely to have heart disease or suffer a stroke than non-diabetics.
- People with Type II diabetes have the same high risk for heart attack as non-diabetics who have already had a heart attack.
- Nearly 75% of people with diabetes also have high blood pressure.
- Smoking doubles the risk for heart disease in people with diabetes.
- People with either Type I or II diabetes have increased risk for kidney failure, deterioration of the retina, and peripheral vascular disease.

So how can this disease be prevented or controlled? Fortunately, prevention and control of diabetes can be fairly simple. The following are some simple, easy methods to help you prevent or control diabetes.

- Contact your physician for a check up to see if you are at risk for diabetes.
- Put less on your plate! Moderate portion sizes keep you trim and healthy. Weight control is a key to preventing diabetes.
- Try not to snack while cooking or cleaning up after meals.
- Do not skip meals! Skipping meals is not an effective way to reduce calories. Eat at regular times throughout each day.
- Pack your lunch. This will enable you to control the amount and type of food you eat and it is cheaper than eating fast food.
- Snack on healthy foods such as fruit or vegetables.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Skip dessert and take a walk.
- When eating out, share your meal with a friend to reduce the portion size.
- You do not have to completely cut out all of your favorite foods, just cut down on the quantity.
- Walk! Walk! Walk!
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Accumulate 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 days of the week to reduce your risks of diabetes.
• Exercise while you watch TV by getting up and moving during the commercials.
• Get up and move for your health!

For more information on reducing your risks of diabetes through simple life style modifications, please call the Human Performance Center at 287-3843.