

Take charge of your health today. Be informed. Be involved.

Allegheny County Health Department recommends taking diabetes risk survey

Of the nearly 30 million people in the nation with diabetes, about a quarter of them—eight million—do not even know they have it. Because of this number, the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is urging county residents to take the Diabetes Risk Test.

"We encourage people to take this test, either online or on paper, to learn if they are at risk for type 2 diabetes. Preventing the disease starts with knowing your risk factors and taking action," said Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, ACHD director.

People who are overweight, inactive and 45 or older should consider themselves at risk for the disease.



KAREN HACKER, MD



Additional risk factors include having a family history of diabetes, high blood pressure, having had gestational diabetes and African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander heritage.

To do the risk test, click on <http://diabetes.org/takethetest> or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh offers a Diabetes Prevention Program. For information, contact Gretchen North at 412-227-3820.

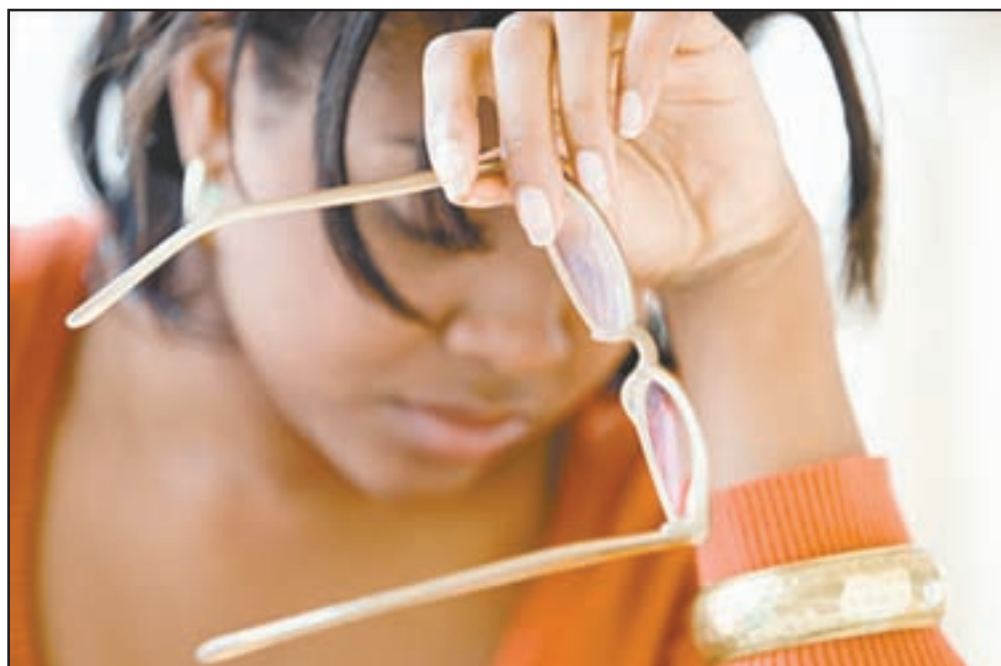
Another resource for adopting a healthier lifestyle is Live Well Allegheny at <http://www.livewellallegheny.com/>.

Don't let vision get blindsided by diabetes

(NNPA)—While people with diabetes are more likely to develop blinding eye diseases, recent studies have revealed low awareness of the issue among ethnicities at higher risk for diabetes and low uptake of preventive eye exams among affected Medicare beneficiaries.

Although Hispanics and African-Americans are more likely to have diabetes than most other ethnicities, a recent poll commissioned by the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research has revealed that only 27 and 32 percent (respectively) report to know about diabetic eye disease. In addition, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that people with diabetes have a dilated eye exam every year. A study recently published in the journal Ophthalmology found that, among Medicare beneficiaries diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma or diabetes — all conditions that require an annual eye exams — three-quarters of those who did not have an exam in five years were those living with diabetes.

"It's alarming that so many people with diabetes or at risk for diabetes may be unaware of the damage their condition can do to their eyes and may not be getting exams to check for it," said Raj K. Maturi, M.D.,



ophthalmologist and clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "Outside of maintaining good blood glu-

cose levels, having an annual dilated eye exam is the best first line defense against vision loss from diabetic eye disease."

The term "diabetic eye disease" encompasses a number of diseases and conditions that can cause blindness if left untreated. These include diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, and glaucoma. Diabetic Retinopathy occurs when the small blood vessels in the eye change by swelling, leaking fluid or closing off completely, blocking blood flow from reaching the retina. A cataract occurs when the eye's lens becomes cloudy, causing vision to become blurry, cloudy or dim. While this happens in many people as they age, those with diabetes are more likely to develop cataracts than their peers without diabetes. Glaucoma is a disease that damages the optic nerve and peripheral vision. The damage to the optic nerve is usually caused by elevated pressure in the eye. Glaucoma can be treated with medication such as prescription eye drops or with surgery, but will result in blindness if left untreated.

The Academy recommends that those with those with type 2 diabetes should get a dilated eye exam at the time of diagnosis and every year following. Those with type 1 diabetes should start receiving annual eye exams five years after their initial diagnosis.

Special to the NNPA from the St. Louis American

Centers for Healthy Hearts and Souls hosts diabetes support groups

by Elaine B. Jenkins, RNPN, and Bruce Block, MD

In 2000, the Centers for Healthy Hearts and Souls (CHHS) was formed. It is a faith/community-based health promotion organization. CHHS aims to develop a model that can be used by anyone for modifying the knowledge, attitude and behaviors that are important for self-care.

Diabetes support group participants are recruited by word of mouth through ongoing relationships with church health ministries, current participants and physicians. Each group meets at key community locations. These locations includes places like the Kingsley Center, Hill House Senior Center, West Park Court and the Latino Family Center. Groups are led by a primary care physician, regis-



tered nurse, occupational therapist or pharmacist. A lay health advocate communicates with participants by telephone and home visits when necessary between group sessions. One group is held in Spanish.

A variety of activities happen at each session. This includes talking about an important health topic (e.g. diabetes), an activity (e.g. taste tests of low-fat salad dressings) and data collection (e.g. blood pressure measurement). There is also time for "Ask the Doctor" or "Ask the Pharmacist" sessions. Speakers such as exercise trainers, podiatrists, mental health specialists and ophthalmologists give presentations and answer questions.

The support group also talks about diabetes self-care and exercise. Snacks are provided because meetings last two hours. The nutritional label details, cost and availability of various snack items are an important part of the learning process.

Each group meeting ends with a blessing that often includes prayers for group members and their family members who need extra support. Many members stay afterward to share stories and other information. *If you would like more information about the diabetes support groups, call 412-419-8939.*

Diabetes-Friendly Recipe from Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank

This recipe packs hearty whole grains and delicious vegetables together into an easy-to-make side dish that goes great with any meal. It goes particularly well with another diabetes-friendly fan favorite, beans and greens. To get that recipe, just log onto pittsburghfoodbank.org/RecipeRainbow and search for collard greens.

Savory Oatmeal Pilaf

Serving size: a bit more than 1 cup

- 1 1/2 cups diced onion
- 6 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups tomatoes, chopped

- 2 cups quick oats or rolled oats
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp dried herbs (oregano, basil, rosemary and/or thyme)
- 2 Tbl canola oil or other oil
- Black pepper to taste

1. Heat a large skillet or saucepan over medium heat. When it is hot, add the oil, onion, black pepper and a pinch of salt.
2. Cook the onion for 10-12 minutes or until browned, stirring once or twice a minute—more often if they are browning too quickly.
3. When the onions are dark, add the gar-

lic and cook for 3-5 minutes or until brown.

4. Add the bell pepper. Cook 7-10 minutes, stirring once or twice.
5. Add tomatoes and dried herbs. Cook 5 minutes, stirring once.
6. Add water and bring to a boil. Stir in oats and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until water has been absorbed and the oats are soft.

Nutritional information per serving—calories: 280, total fat: 10g, saturated fat: 1g, trans fat: 0, cholesterol: 0mg, sodium: 310mg, total carbohydrate: 41g, dietary fiber: 7g, sugars: 5g, protein: 7g



CHOICE study of people recently diagnosed with diabetes

Have you been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes within the last few years? CHOICE—the Communal Health of Interacting Couples Exchange study—is aimed at people who are newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and are either married or living with a partner. The study's goal is to recruit 200 couples in order to learn more about how couples cope with diabetes. Results of the programs will be developed to help people with diabetes in the future.

Two interviewers from Carnegie Mellon University will come to your home (or meet



you at a place convenient to both of you) and interview you about how you have been dealing with diabetes. This session lasts two hours and consists of an interview and some health measures, such as blood pressure, height and weight. In addition, there is a finger-prick for the person with diabetes to

test his/her blood glucose control. The study does not involve any other medical procedures. After this in-person session, each member of the couple receives a tablet computer to use once a day for two weeks. You don't have to have any experience with computers to do this. For completing all parts of the study, each couple receives \$400.

If you are interested in participating in the study or would like more information, please call the project coordinator at 412-268-2784 or ps3x@andrew.cmu.edu.