



THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

November 2008

A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AS THEY REINFORCE THE INFORMATION YOUTH RECEIVE THROUGH WELLNESS JOURNEY PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES.

Preventing diabetes in children can lead to healthier lives

In the past, type 2 diabetes almost exclusively affected adults, typically those who were overweight. But in recent years, type 2 diabetes in children and teens is on the rise - an increase that experts say is related to the rapidly growing number of overweight youth.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition that affects the way the body metabolizes sugar (glucose). It develops in children when the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin or when a child's pancreas produces some, but not enough, insulin to maintain a normal blood sugar level. Either way, the cells can't use the energy from food, and too much sugar builds up in their blood and urine.

Having too much sugar in your blood can damage every part of the body, especially the eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart. Over a lifetime, having diabetes puts someone at much greater risk of heart attack, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure. Circulation problems and nerve damage can also affect the feet and legs.

Left untreated, prediabetes can progress to type 2 diabetes.

Fortunately, diabetes can be prevented in many cases.

Here are a few simple strategies to reduce children's risk for developing type 2 diabetes and other associated health problems:

- Make sure children eat a healthy diet. Encouraging children to eat low-fat, nutrient-rich foods - like whole-grain cereals and breads, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and lean proteins - can help prevent excessive weight gain, one major risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- Limit children's intake of sugary foods and beverages. Consuming lots of sugar-filled foods and beverages - like sodas, juices, and iced teas - can also lead to excessive weight gain.
- Encourage children to increase physical activity. Staying active and decreasing the amount of time spent in sedentary activities - like watching TV or playing video or computer games - can also reduce the risk of weight gain and help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Being active can be as simple as walking the dog, mowing the lawn, riding a bike or playing catch.

Health care professionals can help determine what a child's weight goals should be and how to reach them. It's important for growing kids to get enough calories and nutrients for normal growth and development, while preventing the excessive weight gain that can set the stage for type 2 diabetes and other health problems.

Although kids and teens may be able to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by managing their weight and physical activity, other risk factors for type 2 diabetes can't be changed. Children who have one or more family members with type 2 diabetes have an increased risk of developing the disease. Also, certain



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23

3:30-5:30 p.m.

The Rec Center

Healthy Holidays

FREE fun-filled family event! Activities include Get Fit with Frosty, Jolly Wally Ball, Holly Hoops basketball contests and Healthy Ho Ho Ho. Dasher's Diner will feature healthy holiday food samples and tips. Photos with Santa will be taken, as well. Bring the family and enjoy a healthy start to your holidays!

Sponsored by Healthy Henry County Communities, Mt. Pleasant Park and Rec, Main Street Mt. Pleasant, the Rec Center and the Wellmark Foundation.



PRODUCE PICKS

November is a great month to try these yummy seasonal foods:

- Pears
- Cranberries
- Sweet potatoes
- Pumpkins

TV ALTERNATIVES

This month, choose one night a week to be TV-free! Instead, make it a family fun night to play board games or a work on a big jigsaw puzzle. For a more active evening, go to the gym to shoot baskets, play tag or throw a ball around.

ethnic and racial groups tend to be more prone to developing type 2 diabetes, including people of Native American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Asian/Pacific Island descent.

Log on to learn more!

Check out these web sites or information on diabetes in youth:

- http://kidshealth.org/kid/centers/diabetes_center.html
- http://www.bam.gov/sub_yourbody/yourbody_diabetes.html
- www.healthiergeneration.org/parents.aspx

Super Snacks

Grape Kabobs

Thread red and green grapes on a small pretzel or rounded toothpick. Dip into your favorite flavor of low-fat yogurt. It's a tasty, healthy snack!

Pumpkin Dip

Mix 1/3 cup of canned pumpkin

1 cup applesauce or low-fat vanilla yogurt

½ tsp cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice

Use a dip for apples, pears or graham crackers



Pilot Dave Helman greets travelers Karsyn Lamm and Sydney Doak at the Wellness Journey International Airlines airport terminal

Healthy Fun Takes Flight!

Children and families "boarded" Wellness Journey International Airways for a healthy, fun-filled adventure last month! Travelers enjoyed healthy snacks, activities, games and music from countries around the world.

For more information on the Wellness Journey programming, topics or events, contact Tessa Allworth, Wellness Coordinator, at 319-385-6595 or by e-mail at allwortht@hchc.org.