

Diabetes And Heart Disease: The Life-Threatening Link Everyone Must Know About

(NAPSA)—Time for a heart health quiz!

First question: What are some factors that can increase your risk for heart disease?

If you're like most Americans, your answer probably included obesity, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure—and not type 2 diabetes. Yet people with type 2 diabetes, or adult onset diabetes, are as much as four times as likely to develop heart disease than those without diabetes.

A recent survey conducted by the National Lipid Association (NLA), which examined awareness about type 2 diabetes, cholesterol and heart disease, found that many Americans underestimate the potential of diabetes to cause heart disease. "This lack of awareness can be dangerous for the more than 18 million Americans with type 2 diabetes," said John Guyton, MD, president of the NLA, a multidisciplinary nonprofit association. "Diabetes patients need to understand how much their condition increases their risk for heart disease and take steps to lower their risk."

Countless conditions

OK, question two: What are common health conditions associated with type 2 diabetes? If you said poor circulation, vision loss or high blood pressure, you were right in line with most Americans. Unfortunately, the survey found that cholesterol was mentioned least among a list of six conditions that Americans think diabetes patients face.

Many people with type 2 diabetes tend to have low levels of HDL, or "good," cholesterol and high levels of triglycerides. Furthermore, the LDL or "bad cholesterol" particles are smaller, denser and more dangerous. Together, these lipid imbalances can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. If LDL "bad" cholesterol levels also happen to be high, a person with diabetes has even greater cardiovascular risk.

Controlling cholesterol

Final question: What should people with type 2 diabetes do to stay healthy? Many Americans know that glucose monitoring,

Controlling Type 2 Diabetes

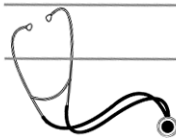
Conditions:

Cholesterol

Glucose Monitoring

Sugar Intake

Exercise



Many people underestimate the potential of type 2 diabetes to cause heart disease.

controlling sugar intake, getting regular exercise and quitting smoking all are important, but results from the survey showed few Americans realize that people with type 2 diabetes need to monitor their cholesterol too.

"It's important for diabetes patients to keep an eye on their cholesterol and avoid developing diabetic dyslipidemia, a condition in which your blood lipids are off target," said Dr. Guyton. "If your cholesterol levels happen to be off, the good news is that improved control of cholesterol and triglycerides in type 2 diabetes patients can reduce cardiovascular complications by 20 to 40 percent."

Information essential for everyone

More than 18 million people in the US have type 2 diabetes, but more alarming is the fact that more than five million have the disease and don't even know it. The NLA wants to encourage patients to talk with their doctors about the importance of routine cholesterol management as part of any diabetes treatment regimen.

For further details on the survey, which was sponsored by AstraZeneca, visit the NLA at www.lipid.org/news. To learn more about the relationship between diabetes and heart disease, visit the American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org.