

Health Bulletin

Why Should You Care About Diabetes?

(NAPSA)—While awareness is growing about the seriousness of diabetes, more needs to be done to fight this deadly disease. That's the word from experts who consider diabetes to be the biggest public health crisis of the 21st century.

During American Diabetes Month this November, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) is asking the American public "Why should you care about diabetes?"

According to John B. Buse, M.D., president, Medicine & Science, American Diabetes Association, "Few people realize the seriousness of diabetes. Not only does it affect many aspects of a person's daily routine, but the complications that can occur as a result of diabetes can be deadly. It is possible to delay or even avoid these complications with proper diabetes management and treatment."

Proper diagnosis and control can help reduce the risks for a number of serious complications, some of which are life threatening. These include:

- Heart disease and stroke—Adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates about two to four times higher than adults without diabetes.

- Blindness—Diabetic retinopathy causes 12,000 to 24,000 new cases of blindness each year, making diabetes the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults 20-74 years of age.

- Kidney disease—Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, accounting for 44 percent of new cases in 2002.

- Amputations—More than 60 percent of nontraumatic lower-limb amputations occur in people with diabetes.

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The purpose of American Diabetes Month is to help raise public awareness about why controlling diabetes is so important.

The good news is that remembering the "ABCs of diabetes" can help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes complications:

- A is for A1C—A test that measures the average blood glucose (sugar) level over the past two to three months. For most people with diabetes, it is important to keep their A1C at less than 7 percent.

- B is for Blood Pressure—People with diabetes should have a target blood pressure of less than 130/80 mmHg.

- C is for Cholesterol—LDL (bad) cholesterol should be below 100 mg/dL; HDL (healthy) cholesterol should be above 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women. Triglycerides should be below 150 mg/dL.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation's premier voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy.

For more information, visit www.diabetes.org or call (800) DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Information from both these sources is available in English and Spanish.