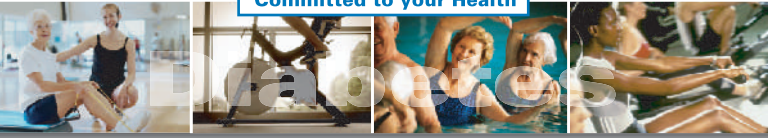




Lindo's
PHARMACY

Committed to your Health



Diabetes

■ What is diabetes?

Diabetes is one of the oldest known diseases. It results in abnormally high levels of sugar (glucose) in blood and urine. There are two types of diabetes. One is called 'Type 1' or 'insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus', where the insulin producing gland, the pancreas, is no longer functioning and therefore patients have to have regular injections of insulin to function. This type is more common in younger patients. The other, 'Type 2' or 'non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus' is common in middle and older age and can be controlled by diet and medication.

■ What causes diabetes?

When glucose, which comes from the digestion of the food you eat, reaches the blood stream, it needs to find its way into the cells where it is burned for energy. The only way it can enter these cells is with the help of a hormone called insulin. When the insulin production by the pancreas falls, or when the body becomes resistant to its effects, diabetes results. Both types of diabetes have definite genetic causes, but it is still difficult to predict accurately who will develop the condition. People with Type 2 diabetes are often overweight and eat an unbalanced diet, which probably contributes to the development of diabetes.

■ What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

The symptoms include: thirst, dehydration, passing large amounts of urine, weight loss, tiredness and lethargy, and blurry vision. These symptoms are more sudden and severe in Type 1 diabetes, but happen in both. Frequent urinary tract infections and yeast infections may also signal diabetes.

■ How is diabetes diagnosed?

Most often, diabetes is diagnosed by observing the symptoms mentioned above, and doing a blood test to determine blood glucose levels. A glucose-tolerance test can also be performed.

■ Can diabetes be cured?

No, diabetes cannot be cured, at present, but it can be controlled. Some people with Type 2 diabetes can control it by following a program of healthy diet and exercise alone. Most people, though, need a combination of exercise, medication or insulin to achieve full control.

■ How important is diet in control of diabetes?

It is extremely important, in both types of diabetes. A healthy diet requires cutting down, as much as possible, on fried and fatty foods, sugar and sugary foods, alcohol and salt, while increasing foods high in fiber, complex carbohydrates, vegetables, whole grains, fish and lean meats. It is a good idea to eat regular, small meals and snacks to help keep blood glucose levels from going too high or too low. In addition to these dietary measures, it is very important to exercise regularly and keep the body weight in the ideal range.

■ What types of drugs are used in treatment of diabetes?

While people with Type 1 diabetes have to use insulin alone, most people with Type 2 diabetes do well on some combination of medication. The most common medications help to stimulate the pancreas to release more insulin, while others help to slow the absorption of glucose from the gut into the cells, resulting in more controlled glucose levels. There are some newer drugs that can be taken right before a meal to help stimulate insulin release around mealtime, when it's needed the most.

■ What side-effects are possible with tablets and insulin?

Most tablets are well tolerated. However, the most important thing to note is the possibility of hypoglycemia whenever insulin or medications, which stimulate insulin secretion, are used. Great care has to be taken to avoid a too-low blood sugar level as it can sometimes lead to a hypoglycemic coma. If symptoms of low-blood sugar happen, such as feeling sweaty, cold and clammy, weakness, hunger, tingling around the lips, irritability/anger, inability to concentrate or drowsiness, it is important to have a sugary snack/candy or drink to bring the glucose levels back to normal as soon as possible.

It may be helpful to use a glucometer, a machine that helps determine glucose levels from a little drop of blood. This also helps monitor the therapy and see what further changes can be made to improve blood sugar control.

Most importantly, LEARN more about diabetes, eat the right foods, lose weight and exercise regularly. Use the resources available. PARTICIPATE! Your life is worth it!

Committed to your Health



tel: 236-7732

email: pharmacy@lindos.bm