

# BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM

HELPING YOU TO BUILD A HEALTHY FUTURE



## Diabetes: A Modern Day Epidemic

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It was the first week of class during winter semester 2002. One of our students stopped by the office to explain why she had been late to class. During the last few weeks she had not felt well, was thirsty, hungry, and losing weight. Each morning she was going to the hospital to meet with her health care provider and have her blood sugar level monitored, as it was alarmingly high. She then explained that she had just been diagnosed with diabetes. Approximately one week later, a similar experience occurred with another female student. These two women are young, in their early twenties, healthy, and average weight. Their profiles do not fit the description of a person who is typically at-risk for developing diabetes. However, they do match the increasing trend of diabetes among young adults.

Diabetes is a condition where there is not enough insulin in the body, or the body has a decreased ability to use the insulin it does have. Insulin can be thought of as the key that opens the lock on body cells. Insulin allows sugar or glucose to enter cells so that it can be converted to energy. The most common type of diabetes is type 2 (90-95% of cases) where the body cannot use the insulin it makes. This condition often appears after age 40, but as noted earlier, is occurring more frequently in younger ages, including children and teens.

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes is increasing at epidemic proportions. In just ten years, from 1990-2000, there was a 49% increase in the diagnosed prevalence of diabetes. In the U.S., 17 million people have diabetes and an additional 5.9 million people are unaware they have diabetes. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.

When the two students we mentioned were initially diagnosed with diabetes, both were concerned about how it would impact their life. One student stated, "I felt overwhelmed many times by the situation I now found myself in." The other student was not sure if she would complete the semester, or if she would drop out of school until she could get her life back in order. One woman was recently married, and wondered how it would affect her ability to have children, or if she would go blind. In reality, most people with diabetes continue to live a normal, healthy life, if they manage the level of sugar in their blood. However, when blood sugar remains too high, then complications, often life threatening, can result. These complications can include eye disease and blindness, kidney failure, loss of limbs, heart disease, and death.

Often, diabetes goes undiagnosed because many of its symptoms seem harmless. Some of the symptoms of diabetes are: frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme

hunger, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, and blurry vision. If you have one or more of these symptoms, see your doctor right away.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that all individuals age 45 and older be tested for diabetes, and if the test is normal, they should be tested every three years. Testing should be conducted at earlier ages and repeated more often in individuals who are any of the following: obese, have a first-degree relative with diabetes, are members of a high risk ethnic population (African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific-Islander, Asian-American), have delivered a baby weighing more than nine pounds, have had diabetes during pregnancy, have high blood pressure, have low levels of HDL cholesterol, have high levels of triglycerides, or who, on a previous glucose testing had impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose.

Although some factors that increase your risk of developing diabetes cannot be changed, such as genetics and the aging process, there are steps you can take to reduce the odds. First, get 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week. This means activity that makes your heart beat faster than normal, makes you breathe harder, and uses the major muscle groups. You can also eat a healthy diet with a variety of foods, including five fruits and vegetables a day.

By the semester's end, both of our students who had been diagnosed with diabetes had adapted to their new lifestyle. They each struggled to keep their blood sugar at an acceptable level, and to adjust their eating habits, physical activity and medication accordingly. The one student did not drop out of school but was able to finish her classes. Unsatisfied with the information provided by her healthcare provider, the other student researched the subject herself. She stated, "Since those first two frustrating months, I have been able to gain a better understanding of how to properly care for myself and how to prevent complications."

If you are interested in learning more about the prevention and treatment of diabetes, visit the American Diabetes website at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

### Facts on Diabetes:

About 16 million Americans have diabetes, but only about 10 million have been diagnosed.

Approximately 798,000 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed annually in the United States.

# National Safety Month!

## Defensive Driving Course

Learn Safe Driving Tips.  
Receive defensive driving certification  
for insurance purposes.  
Don't miss out on this one!

Wednesday, June 12, 2002  
268 UPB  
1:00-5:00 p.m.

In 2000, 3.9 million Americans suffered disabling injuries on the job.  
It has been estimated that 77% of accidents are due to driver error.

## The Light at the End of the Carpal Tunnel Ergonomics Workshop

Come and find out how good posture at  
the computer can help keep necks, wrists  
and spines from growing old before their  
time.

Thursday, June 13, 2002  
3228 WSC  
12:00 -1:00 p.m.

## BYU Wellness Program's Doubles Racquetball and 3-on-3 Basketball Tournaments

The BYU Wellness Program is excited  
to announce the Spring Semester bas-  
ketball and raquetball tournaments!  
This is a fantastic opportunity to meet  
other university personnel and perfect  
playing ability.

Find your teammates and  
sign up now at  
[www.byu.edu/wellness](http://www.byu.edu/wellness).

Register by May 29.

It's time for a little challenge!

## FACTS ON SAFETY!



- ◆ In the year 2000, motor vehicle crashes caused a death every 12 minutes and a disabling injury every 14 seconds. These crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages one to 33.
- ◆ About 1/3 of all occupational injuries and illnesses stem from over exertion and over repetitive motion. Cost to the nation in direct worker's compensation costs range as high as \$20 billion.

