

The lowdown on Type 2 Diabetes

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Type 2 diabetes is associated with obesity and is a chronic disease that occurs when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces and accounts for 90% of people around the world that have been diagnosed with the condition. The remaining 10% account for Type 1 diabetes which is an autoimmune disorder not related to obesity. Reports of type 2 diabetes in children have increased worldwide and in some areas of the world accounts for almost half of newly diagnosed cases in children and adolescents. The World Health Organisation (WHO) state that around 347 million people worldwide have diabetes and the burden is increasing globally, largely due to rapid increases in obesity and physical inactivity. In 2012 diabetes was the direct cause of 1.5 million deaths. WHO predict that by 2030, diabetes will become the 7th leading cause of death worldwide, with deaths from diabetes projected to rise by 50% in the next 10 years.

Diabetes UK state that there are 3.1 million adults in England alone living with type 2 diabetes and around 850,000

people have the condition and are not aware or have not been diagnosed. Diabetes has become one of the major causes of premature illness and death in many countries, mainly through cardiovascular disease and is the leading cause of blindness, amputation and kidney failure through lack of awareness and education of the disease coupled with insufficient access to health care.

People with diabetes are unable to regulate the level of glucose in their blood because the insulin, which is a hormone produced by the pancreas that regulates blood sugar levels within the body, is not working efficiently. Glucose is found in starchy and sugary foods, insulin helps to remove glucose from our blood cells where it is broken down to produce energy. If the insulin isn't working properly the chemical process is interrupted and glucose builds up in the blood cells damaging body systems and our health. Over time if the body can't manage to effectively use the insulin it produces it can lead to serious damage to the body systems especially nerves and blood vessels, causing hypertension

and is closely related to heart disease and strokes through obesity. The kidneys are particularly at risk through poorly controlled diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol resulting in diabetic nephropathy which is the deterioration of kidney function. Diabetic retinopathy is blindness caused by diabetes and occurs as a result of accumulated damage to small blood vessels in the retina.

Symptoms of diabetes include feeling thirsty, urinating more frequently than usual, feeling tired, slow healing wounds and blurred vision.

Prevention of diabetes, or controlling diagnosed diabetes is simple. Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight, being physically active and eating a calorie controlled diet avoiding fats, sugars and processed foods and increasing fruit, vegetables and fibre intake will prevent type 2 diabetes developing. Stopping smoking and reducing alcohol consumption will also prevent the disease and will improve health, fitness and physical and mental wellbeing.