



# WELLNESS WORKS....

## at Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc.

A Publication from Brain Injury Community Re-entry Niagara's Wellness Works Committee

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# Diabetes

### In this issue:

- Types of Diabetes
- Symptoms
- Are you at risk?

## More than two million Canadians have diabetes

There are three main types of diabetes.

**Type 1** is usually diagnosed in children and adolescents, and occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce insulin. Insulin is a hormone that ensures body energy needs are met. Approximately 10% of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes.

The remaining 90% have **type 2** diabetes, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not effectively use the insulin that is produced. Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adulthood, although increasing numbers of children in high-risk populations are being diagnosed.

A third type of diabetes, **gestational diabetes**, is a temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy. It affects approximately 3.7% of all pregnancies (in the non-Aboriginal population) and involves an increased risk of developing diabetes for both mother and child.

### **Is Diabetes Serious?**

If left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can result in a variety of complications, including:

- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Kidney disease
- ◆ Eye disease
- ◆ Problems with erection (impotence)
- ◆ Nerve damage

The first step in preventing or delaying the onset of these complications is recognizing the risk factors, as well as signs and symptoms of diabetes.

### **What are the risk factors for diabetes?**

If you are aged 40 or over, you are at risk for type 2 diabetes and should be tested at least every three years. If any of the following risk factors apply, you should be tested earlier and/or more often.

#### Being:

- a member of a high-risk group (Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent)
- over weight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your middle)

#### Having:

- a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- health complications that are associated with diabetes
- given birth to a baby that weighed more than 4 kg (9 lb)
- had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol or other fats in the blood
- been diagnosed with any of the following conditions:
  - polycystic ovary syndrome
  - acanthosis nigricans (darkened patches of skin)
  - schizophrenia

***Can you prevent diabetes?*** Scientists believe that lifestyle changes can help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. A healthy meal plan, weight control and physical activity are important prevention steps.



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## What are the symptoms?

### Signs and symptoms of diabetes include the following:

- Unusual thirst
- Frequent Urination
- Weight change (gain or loss)
- Extreme fatigue or lack of energy
- Blurred vision
- Frequent or recurring infections
- Cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Trouble getting or maintaining an erection

It is important to recognize, however, that many people who have type 2 diabetes may display no symptoms. By evaluating your risk factors and recognizing your symptoms, you can be diagnosed earlier and start taking action towards staying well!

If you have type 2 diabetes, you children, brothers, and sisters are at risk. Urge them to be tested!

## How is diabetes treated?

People with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful diabetes management, which includes the following:

**Education:** Diabetes education is an important first step. All people with diabetes need to be informed about their condition.

**Physical Activity:** Regular physical activity helps your body lower blood glucose levels, promotes weight loss, reduces stress and enhances overall fitness.

**Nutrition:** What, when and how much you eat all play an important role in regulating blood glucose levels.

**Weight Management:** Maintaining a healthy weight is especially important in the management of type 2 diabetes.

**Medication:** Type 1 diabetes is always treated with insulin. Type 2 diabetes is managed through physical activity and meal planning and may require medications and/or insulin to assist your body in making or using insulin more effectively.

**Lifestyle Management:** Learning to reduce stress levels in day-to-day life can help people with diabetes better manage their disease.

**Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure can lead to eye disease, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, so people with diabetes should try to maintain a blood pressure level below 130/80. To do this, you may need to change your eating and physical activity habits and/or take medication.

## Diabetes-friendly Recipe!: Balsamic Mozzarella Chicken Wrap

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup each: sliced roma and yellow tomatoes
- ½ cup part-skim mozzarella shredded cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 tbsp. calorie-wise balsamic vinaigrette dressing
- 4 whole wheat tortillas
- 2 tbsp. Miracle Whip calorie-wise dressing
- 2 small boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked, cut into strips

### To Make It!

MIX tomatoes, cheese, basil and vinaigrette dressing; set aside.

SPREAD tortillas evenly with Miracle Whip; top with chicken and tomato mixture.

FOLD over opposite sides of each tortilla, and then roll up starting at bottom of tortilla. Serve immediately or wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

