

# Diabetes

NEWS

Baptist-South Miami Diabetes Care Centers

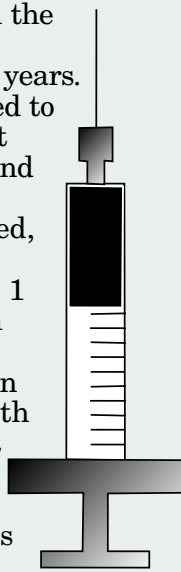
October — December 2003

## Pramlintide, a new weapon in diabetes care

A new medication about to come on the market may offer the most dramatic improvement in diabetes care in many years. It's called pramlintide, and it is expected to be available to consumers by early next year. It will be marketed under the brand name Symlin.

Diabetes care specialists are excited, since this could be the first potential new treatment for patients with Type 1 diabetes since the discovery of insulin some 80 years ago.

"I'm thrilled with this new addition to diabetes management," said Kenneth B. Shephard, M.D., an endocrinologist on the Baptist Health medical staff. "Pramlintide may be that new drug we've been waiting for to help patients reach optimum blood sugar control without the weight gain and hypoglycemia



that patients fear so much. We may be on the verge of defeating a great enemy in this battle against diabetes."

Pramlintide is a synthetic form of the hormone amylin, which is produced by the pancreas along with insulin and glucagon. Like insulin, amylin has a crucial effect on blood sugar control. The pancreas of a person who does not have diabetes releases amylin together with insulin and glucagon, and these hormones work in unison to help the body keep blood sugar within healthy levels. People who produce little or no insulin also produce little or no amylin, so glucagon raises blood sugar levels unchecked.

Many patients with diabetes inject insulin to counteract the glucagon. But a number of these patients can't control blood sugar levels even when injecting insulin several times daily and carefully following a treatment plan.

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## Free programs offered

Two programs, one for those with diabetes and another for people with the lesser-known condition of Insulin Resistance Syndrome, are being offered by the Diabetes Care Centers of Baptist and South Miami Hospitals.

**"Know Your Resistance: A Guide to Better Health"** is for those with Insulin Resistance Syndrome who are at high risk for developing diabetes and share the same risks for suffering from the complications of diabetes, including cardiovascular disease. The program, sponsored by Bayer Pharmaceuticals, will educate people on how to develop a game plan to stay healthy.

It will first be offered in Spanish at South Miami Hospital on **Wednesday, Oct. 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** at the Victor E. Clarke Education

Center. Call **786-662-5168** to register.

The English version of the program will be at Baptist Hospital on **Thursday, Nov. 6, 7-9 p.m.** in the Auditorium, third floor, South Building. Call **786-596-3696** to register. The programs are free, but registration is required. Light refreshments will be served at each program.

For people with diabetes, a program on **"Low Blood Sugars: Learn to Fear Them Less"** is being offered **Monday, Nov. 17, 7-9 p.m.** in the Baptist Hospital Auditorium. The program addresses the concern of diabetes patients that they will suffer a low-blood-sugar reaction if they attempt to keep their levels close to normal. It's free, but registration is required by calling **786-596-3696**.

Baptist Hospital & Baptist Children's Hospital  
786-596-3696



South Miami Hospital • 786-662-5168  
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## From the Administrator

What is very evident in talking to people, both professionals and patients, is that everyone still struggles to define diabetes.

The determination is made based on blood glucose readings. You are normal if your blood tests provide fasting blood sugars of 60-110 mg/dl, random blood tests show glucose levels of less than 150, and two hours after a meal the readings are less than 140 mg/dl. But how far above that can you go and still be normal? If you are at 115 instead of 110, are you abnormal?

You officially cross the line into diagnosed diabetes if on two occasions your fasting results are above 126 mg/dl, or a random blood sugar on two occasions is more than 200 mg/dl.

But what if you fall between? What if you occasionally show a high reading? When do the health problems associated with diabetes begin to be a concern?

The professional community continues to struggle with this, using terms such as “borderline” (now in disfavor) and most recently “pre-diabetes.” We now define “pre-diabetes” as a condition that precedes the development of overt diabetes, which doesn’t really explain much, does it?

But the truth is, it doesn’t matter what we call it. “Pre-diabetes” is not a warning

that someday you might develop a health problem. We know that people with “pre-diabetes” suffer the same complications as people with diabetes. There are plenty of people who don’t yet have full-blown diabetes who already are suffering from the cardiovascular complications associated with diabetes. So why even make the distinction?

If you have “pre-diabetes,” it means you already have a health problem, and you need to treat it as seriously and aggressively as if your numbers had crossed the line into overt diabetes. If your blood glucose numbers are anywhere outside normal, assume you have a problem and do something about it.

The first step is to get a blood test and check your glucose levels. If you hear the word “pre-diabetes” associated with your results, don’t breathe a sigh of relief. Be concerned. Get education and treatment at once!

Call us at the Diabetes Care Center at Baptist Hospital at **786-596-3696** or South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5168**. You also can attend the free education program we’re offering on Insulin Resistance Syndrome. Details are on page one.

**Lois Exelbert, R.N.**

*Administrator*

*Diabetes Care Center, Baptist Hospital*

## Pramlintide, a new weapon in diabetes care

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Insulin alone doesn’t work for them. They need amylin, also, but amylin in medication form has not been available until now.

The clinical trials of pramlintide have been promising. Taken with insulin, patients are able to more closely reproduce the functioning of a healthy pancreas. Blood sugar control significantly improves after meals and hemoglobin A1C levels are reduced.

Speaking in scientific terms, pramlintide helps correct two problems frequently seen in people with diabetes.

First, a person with diabetes tends to produce too much glucagon after meals, which in turn makes the liver release too much sugar into the bloodstream. Pramlintide prevents the release of glucagon. Second, the person with diabetes absorbs the nutrients from food

too quickly, causing a quick rise in blood sugar levels after meals. Pramlintide slows the absorption of sugar from the food.

Pramlintide is injected before meals, along with insulin. It is meant to supplement insulin, not replace it. Unlike insulin, pramlintide does not cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and it does not cause weight gain. In fact, studies show that people using pramlintide may lose a little weight.

Talk to your doctor or diabetes educator about whether pramlintide should be added to your care plan when it becomes available. You can learn more about this subject at the manufacturer’s website, [www.amylin.com](http://www.amylin.com).

**Maria Gough, R.N., CDE**

*Nurse Manager*

*Diabetes Care Center, South Miami Hospital*



## Alaska cruise a hit!

The Diabetes Care Center's seventh symposium, held onboard *Celebrity Summit*, offered the 40 attendees a chance to learn the latest information about diabetes management while enjoying the pristine beauty of Alaska.

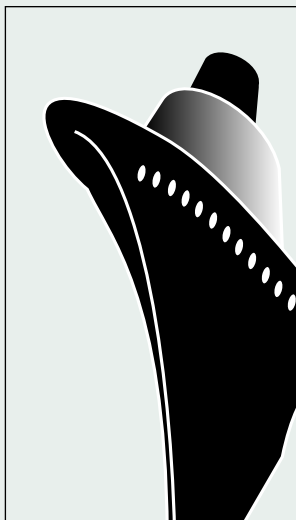
Physicians, nurses, dietitians and others from Miami and around the world attended 20 hours of lectures given by specialists in diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The program covered the latest developments in the diagnosis and treatment of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, current state-of-the-art therapies for complications of diabetes and the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

"The symposium cruise was a perfect setting and environment for learning about cutting-edge information on diabetes management," said Michael Ozner, M.D., Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute cardiologist who was one of the speakers.

"A lot of valuable information was presented, including the latest on some of the newer drugs physicians can use in their practice for the treatment of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. And a big advantage of the symposium is the ability to have time to spend with the other faculty members and attendees and discuss clinical issues," he said. Other doctors agreed that the quality of speakers, their national reputation and their teaching skills provided valuable information they can take back to their practices to benefit their patients.

As with previous cruise seminars, this trip allowed plenty of time for relaxation, sightseeing, entertainment and family activities. Plans are underway for the next symposium in summer 2005. Participants voted for Greece or Spain. If you'd like to learn more about the next cruise, call **786-596-3696**.

**Barbara Moore**  
Baptist Hospital



## The six-pound holidays

The holidays are a challenge for people who want to eat healthily. The typical American gains six pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. How can you avoid this? Here are some holiday eating tips:

**Plan ahead:** Call ahead and ask what will be served and develop a personal menu for yourself.

**Eat before going out:** Have some vegetables, a salad or a light snack before going to your gathering.

**Avoid mindless eating:** If you stand near the table, scoops of nuts and chips find their way into your hands. Select single-serving foods rather than eating by the handful.

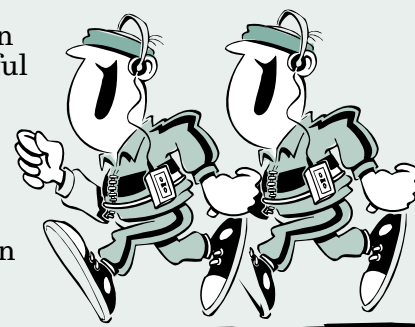
**Use low-fat substitutes:** Try using chicken broth and skim milk instead of butter, egg whites instead of whole eggs, non-fat yogurt to replace mayonnaise. Try small amounts of pineapple or apple juice for sweet potatoes instead of butter and brown sugar. Instead of rich pies, make the sweet potatoes your dessert! Sauté vegetables for stuffing in wine or broth rather than butter.

**At the bar:** Check with a healthcare professional about alcohol consumption if you have diabetes. Alcoholic beverages count as a fat exchange if you have diabetes.

**Burn, baby, burn:** Exercise can be especially helpful during the holidays. Not only is it a stress-reliever from shopping, but you may still be able to maintain your weight and blood sugar control even if you are eating slightly more calories.

**Shift the focus:** Food plays a big and important role in the fun of the holidays, but don't let it be the focus. Concentrate on family and friends. It's hard to converse with a mouthful of food.

**JoAnn Feldman, R.D., CDE**  
Registered Dietitian  
Diabetes Care Center, Baptist Hospital



## Support group meetings

### SOUTH MIAMI

**HOSPITAL** — Victor E. Clarke Education Center, U.S. 1 and SW 62 Avenue.

Call **786-662-5168** to register.

**Diabetes Support Group** — 3-4 p.m., first Wednesday of the month, Classroom C.

**Insulin Pump Support Group** — 7-8:30 p.m., third Thursday of the month, Classroom D.

**BAPTIST HOSPITAL** — 8900 N. Kendall Drive. Call **786-596-3696** to register.

**Adult Diabetes Support Group** — 1:30-2:30 p.m., first Thursday of the month, Diabetes Classroom, 3 Main West.

**Adult Spanish Support Group** — 1:30-2:30 p.m., third Thursday of the month, Diabetes Classroom, 3 Main West.



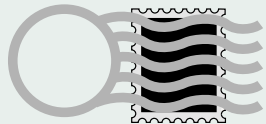
**BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** — 8900 N. Kendall Drive. Call **786-596-3696** to register.

**Parent/Child Support Group** — 10-11:30 a.m., second Saturday of the month. Meetings alternate between Baptist Children's Hospital and Miami Children's Hospital, 6125 SW 31 St. (call for location).

**Teen/Preteen Support Group** — A 10-week support series for teens and preteens, led by Gary X. Lancelotta, Ph.D., and Debbie Gillman, R.N. A \$50 fee covers both participation and a required initial screening by the psychology staff. For information about times and dates, call **786-596-3696**.

**HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL** — 160 NW 13 St., Homestead. Call **786-596-3696** to register.

**Diabetes Support Group** — 6-7 p.m., first Tuesday of the month, Education Center.



## Additions

Call **786-596-3696** if you would like a friend to receive future free issues of *Diabetes News*.

*Diabetes News* is published quarterly for the friends of Baptist-South Miami Diabetes Care Centers. The Centers are recognized by the American Diabetes Association. If you'd like to make an appointment at any of our six convenient locations, call **786-596-3696** at Baptist Hospital or **786-662-5168** at South Miami Hospital. For a referral to a physician specializing in diabetes care, call the Physician Referral Service at **786-596-6557**. You can also visit us online @ [www.baptisthealth.net](http://www.baptisthealth.net). If you prefer not to receive future issues of *Diabetes News*, please call us at **786-596-6534**, or e-mail [diabetes@baptisthealth.net](mailto:diabetes@baptisthealth.net).



**Baptist Health  
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