

Diabetes

NEWS

Baptist-South Miami Diabetes Care Centers

April — June 2004

Pregnancy can be safe if diabetes is controlled

There was a time not so long ago when women with diabetes were warned not to have children because the risks of complications were so great. Today, with our better understanding of the disease and our ability to control blood sugar levels, the risks can be reduced to about the same as for women without diabetes.

The secret lies in tight control of blood sugar levels before and during pregnancy. The American Diabetes Association recommends a before-meal blood sugar of 80 to 110 mg/dL before conception. Your healthcare team will work with you to determine effective glycemic control during your pregnancy. These levels are usually recommended to be even lower.

Effective birth control is essential for women with diabetes. Accidental pregnancy can be dangerous for mother and baby. It is known that poor glycemic control before conception and during the first eight weeks of gestation increases the risk of birth defects.

These birth defects usually affect the heart, the nervous system, the spinal column, the digestive tract and the urinary tract. There is also an increased risk of early miscarriage.

A woman with diabetes also faces increased risks to her own health if blood sugar isn't controlled before and during pregnancy. These risks include kidney damage (nephropathy), worsening or loss of vision due to retinopathy and high blood pressure. If the woman already has any of these conditions, pregnancy will worsen them if blood sugar is not tightly controlled. This underscores the importance of planning and working with the healthcare team to achieve optimal health before conception.

Pregnancy can and should be a joyous time in a woman's life. But for the woman with pre-existing diabetes, it's also a time of stress and worry over possible complications. If you have diabetes and are ready to start or add to your family, consult with your physician to evaluate your health before you stop using contraception. Preconception counseling and care will significantly increase your chances of having a normal and successful pregnancy.

For more information, call the Diabetes Care Center at South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5168**, or Baptist Hospital at **786-596-3696**, or talk to your doctor.

Oleta Powell, R.N.

Diabetes Nurse Educator

South Miami Hospital Diabetes Care Center

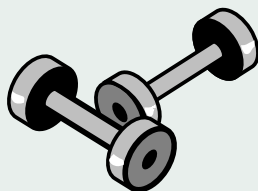


Step up to health

"Healthy Steps," a program about the importance of exercise, is being offered in English and Spanish by the Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center.

The program in English will be **Tuesday, May 18**, and in Spanish on **Thursday, June 17**. Both will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Baptist Hospital Auditorium.

Sponsored by the Bayer Pharmaceutical Group, the program will be free, but registration is required by calling **786-596-3696**. Light refreshments will be served.



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



South Miami Hospital • 786-662-5168
Homestead Hospital • 786-596-3696

From the Administrator

One of the advantages of seeking diabetes education from an experienced center is that we've probably heard it all before. You will quickly hear from us that you are not alone!

We know your frustration. We know that you feel guilty. We know that many people feel a stigma about their disease because it is often associated with obesity and a sedentary lifestyle.

"If only I were thinner and exercised more — maybe I wouldn't have gotten this disease!" Is that you talking? Or, you go to your physician, who says things like: "Just zip up your mouth and your blood sugars will be controlled!" How does that make you feel?

It's a real barrier to getting people with Type 2 diabetes to seek proper treatment. But once we get our hands on you, we'll tell you some truths that will make you feel better. For example, while it's true that the incidence of diabetes is rising because of poor dietary habits and sedentary lifestyles, it is also true that diabetes is a hereditary disease. Your biggest mistake was not choosing parents with healthier genes!

You are entitled to receive care from a team of professionals who will work with you to maintain your health. Today, there are so many new approaches and treatments for diabetes that every single person is able to attain perfectly normal blood sugars. Yes, we can help you improve your chances of avoiding common diabetes complications.

So don't feel guilty. Don't feel it's hopeless. Don't feel like you don't deserve treatment because it's all your fault. Come meet our staff. Usually, you can try education risk-free because many insurance companies pay for it. They're smart enough to realize that education is a good investment that will save them big bucks in the long run if they don't have to pay for the expensive treatments of diabetes complications.

Call us at the Diabetes Care Center at Baptist Hospital at **786-596-3696**, or South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5168**. We'll get you on the right track.

Lois Exelbert, R.N.

Administrator

Diabetes Care Center, Baptist Hospital

End the Elusive Addiction

Since diabetes is a disease of small blood vessels and smoking narrows small blood vessels, smoking and diabetes don't mix well. People with diabetes should not smoke.

Everyone knows that cigarette smoking is a health risk. But for people with diabetes, studies show that smoking consistently increases the risk of serious illness and premature death associated with small-vessel complications. Smoking may even have a role in the development of Type 2 diabetes.

The good news is that if you stop smoking, you substantially decrease the risks. Health educators know that smoking cessation is an important part of the intervention and treatment for those with diabetes.

The Elusive Addiction Program at South Miami Hospital uses clinical assessment and behavior modification with the emphasis on positive changes to help participants become nonsmokers for life.

Led by respiratory therapists and smoking cessation counselors, the program offers

special activities, guest speakers and innovative approaches to help a person stay off cigarettes forever. After the program is completed, follow-up phone calls and support sessions help participants stay on track.

For more information, call **786-662-8484**.

Mikki Thompson

Respiratory Care Manager

South Miami Hospital

Cruise the Baltic

We have the dates and we're almost sure of the place, so if you want to take a great cruise while learning about the latest in diabetes care and chatting with experts, then mark your calendar for **June 22-July 3, 2005**. The next Diabetes Symposium Cruise likely will span the Baltic, visiting Amsterdam, Denmark, Sweden and Estonia, and climax with two days in St. Petersburg, Russia. Stay tuned for more details.



Insulin without needles

The great challenge in diabetes care is to find a way to deliver insulin without the pain of a needle.

There's some promising research into alternative delivery systems, but it may be a while until any of these are on the market, according to Lois Exelbert, R.N., administrator of the Diabetes Care Center at Baptist Hospital. Four possibilities are being studied, including pills, patches, mouth sprays and inhalers. All must undergo much more testing before they become available.

Many people think that the **insulin pill** already exists, but the pills that patients take for diabetes care are not insulin. They are medicines that improve the way the body's own insulin works.

Putting insulin in a pill presents several serious scientific challenges. Oral insulin is destroyed by stomach digestive juices so it would need to be sufficiently coated to make it through the stomach and still be effective.

Also, the amount of insulin that can be put in a pill is small compared to what can be delivered in a syringe.

But scientists at two companies report promising results in an initial human test of a pill, which could eventually replace the needle for people with mild diabetes, or to provide a quick-acting dose of insulin just before a meal.

Inhalers, similar to the ones used to treat asthma, are the subject of many studies around the country. Ten presentations on the subject were made at a recent meeting of the American Diabetes Association (one of them from the University of Miami). But the main drawback so far is the same as with the pill — only a small amount of insulin can be delivered at one time. An alternative to inhalers is a **mouth spray** containing insulin that would be absorbed through the lining of the mouth and throat instead of in the lungs.

A **skin patch** could complement other forms of insulin delivery. One company is developing a patch that can transmit insulin through the skin in the low, steady quantities needed between meals.

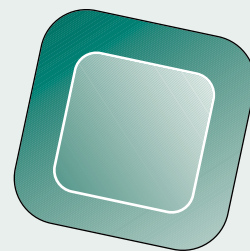
But it's not just a matter of slapping on a



patch. First, the patient must apply a reusable electronic patch powered by a small battery that (painlessly, the company says) burns microscopic holes in the outer layer of skin. Next, a patch containing insulin is applied, in much the same way as the nicotine patch.

The current trial version of the patch lasts for 12 hours. The company says it is developing versions that might last for several days.

Even while researchers work on pain-free insulin delivery options, doctors say the real long-term solution is to find ways that patients can grow new insulin-producing cells to replace the missing or damaged cells that can cause diabetes. This would do away with the need for external sources of insulin. But that's a long time away.



Your personal metabolism

There's a new Medgem Device at Baptist Hospital's Diabetes Care Center that can measure your resting metabolic rate (RMR). You breathe into the device for 10 minutes, and the result tells you how many calories you actually need in a day to maintain your weight. Then you know in very personal terms how many calories to cut or add in order to lose or gain weight.

You should be tested before eating anything in the morning, or at least four hours after your last meal. The cost is \$25 for Diabetes Care Center patients and \$45 for others. Call **786-596-3696** for an appointment or more information.



Support group meetings

All programs are free unless otherwise indicated.

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, Auditorium 1.

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

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.



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.

BAPTIST MEDICAL PLAZA AT WESTCHESTER — 8840 Bird Road. Call **786-596-3696** to register.

Adult Spanish Support Group — 3:30-4:30 p.m., third Thursday of the month.

Additions



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

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 at 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.



**Baptist Health
South Florida**

**Baptist-South Miami
Diabetes Care Centers**

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