

# Diabetes

NEWS

Baptist-South Miami Diabetes Care Centers

July — September 2005

## Diabetes requires summer foot care

Summer is a time for beaches and bare feet, and represents a particular danger for people with diabetes.

Neuropathy — nerve damage resulting in diminished sensations to the feet — is a common complication of diabetes. Such things as sunburn, hot sand and hot pavement, which would cause most people to react with pain, might not be noticed by someone with diabetes.

The same with a too-hot hot tub, irritations from sandals or tight shoes, glass on the beach, rocks and sharp shells in the surf, and chemical injury from over-the-counter corn removers.

I don't want to scare you, but each year about 54,000 people with diabetes have amputations. Most of these begin as minor injuries that were left untreated and allowed to develop into ulcers. Almost all of these amputations could have been prevented with basic foot care.

Here are the basic 10 tips on foot care from the American Diabetes Association:

**1. Wash your feet every day.** Wash them gently, but really wash them, with soap and a washcloth. The water that runs off your body while you are standing in the shower doesn't count! Do not put lotion between your toes, and discuss foot powders with your doctor before using them.

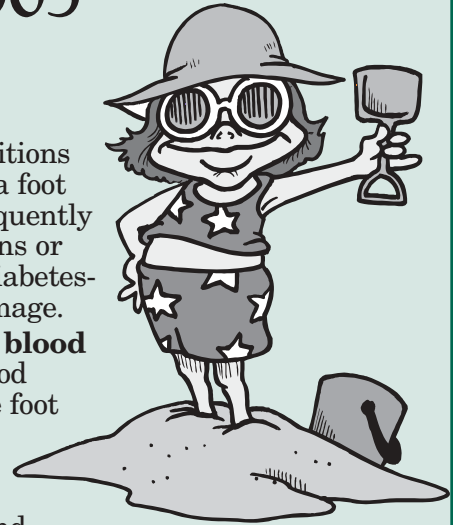
**2. Check your feet every day.** Check the top, bottom, sides, and between the toes of each foot. If you have trouble seeing the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror, or let your spouse help you. If you notice any red spots, wounds, bruises, rashes or injuries, call your doctor right away. Do not try to remove corns or calluses yourself.

**3. Get regular foot exams.** You should have a thorough foot exam at least once a year to

identify any conditions that could cause a foot ulcer — more frequently if you have bunions or hammertoes or diabetes-related nerve damage.

**4. Control your blood sugars.** High blood glucose can cause foot neuropathy. Good blood sugar control can reduce the risk and progression of diabetic neuropathy by 40 to 60 percent.

*Continued on page 3*



## Hurricane preparedness

In addition to all of the normal hurricane preparations, people with diabetes have to worry about dealing with their illness if the power goes out. That means having medication and supplies on hand, as well as a stockpile of appropriate foods.

Get a storage container that can be kept dry — a box or insulated bag — and prepare at least a two-week supply of such items as:

- Syringes or pen needles for insulin injection.
- Insulin pump supplies.
- Alcohol swabs.
- Extra batteries for glucose meter.
- Test strips, lancet device, and lancets for meter.
- Ketone test strips (type 1 diabetes).
- Glucose tablets, regular soda, juice and hard candies to treat low blood sugar.
- Glucagon emergency kit to treat insulin shock.

*Continued on page 2*

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



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## From the Administrator

Most doctors know that psychosocial issues are the primary reason that people with diabetes don't properly manage their illness. But few people with diabetes receive counseling to deal with how diabetes affects their lives.

That's the primary finding in a new landmark study called "DAWN" — for Diabetes Attitudes, Wishes and Needs. It's the first global study to address psychosocial issues among people with diabetes and their healthcare providers.

The study included 5,426 people with diabetes, 2,194 primary care physicians and 1,122 nurses from around the world. The results: 80 percent of healthcare providers understand that psychosocial problems result in inadequate diabetes management, but fewer than 65 percent felt able to identify those problems, and fewer than 33 percent felt able to provide this kind of support.

Of the patients, only 10 percent reported ever receiving access to psychological care.

The study illustrates the need for good communication between the person with diabetes and the healthcare provider, identifies the nurse as the key player in facilitating

communication between patient and physician and stresses that access to team care results in better outcomes.

Here at the Diabetes Care Centers, we find no surprises in the study. We know that the patients who enroll with us do better than patients who don't. We provide not only education for people with diabetes, but also a setting in which they can interact with each other, discuss their problems with professionals and feel more in control of their lives. Just knowing the facts about diabetes isn't enough, and programs like ours are a necessity, not a luxury.

The services of the Diabetes Care Centers today are often covered by insurance, in sharp contrast to a decade ago. But we still have a way to go to make that universal.

If you've never experienced the Diabetes Care Centers at Baptist and South Miami Hospitals, please call and see if we are covered by your insurance (Baptist Hospital at **786-596-3696** or South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5168**). Perhaps we can change your life.

**Lois Exelbert, R.N., CDE**

*Administrator*

*Diabetes Care Center, Baptist Hospital*

## Hurricane preparedness

*Continued from page 1*

- Prescriptions for diabetes supplies.
- Medication for nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

If you use insulin, make sure you have an adequate supply on hand. Keep bottles of insulin refrigerated. If power goes off during a storm, cool temperatures in the refrigerator will safeguard the insulin for several hours. Transfer insulin to a cooler with ice packs when the refrigerator is no longer cool, but be sure the insulin bottles don't touch the ice or ice packs.

Once opened, the insulin is good for 28 days at temperatures under 86° F. Insulin pens have different expiration dates once opened, so check the package insert or call your diabetes educator or pharmacist if you are unsure of storage times. Remember that all insulin must be protected from bright light, extreme heat and extreme cold.

Fill your prescriptions if a storm is threatening. If you are not due for a refill under your insurance plan, pay for extra on your own and try arguing with the insurance company

later. The important thing is to have the medication in your possession if stores are closed and storm damage is preventing deliveries.

Stock a two-week supply of nonperishable foods that fit your meal plan. This might include crackers, peanut butter, tuna, boxed milk, unsweetened cereal and canned fruit. Don't forget a manual can opener!

After a storm, be especially careful about your feet. Standing water may hide hazards such as nails, glass, wood and other storm debris. Wear sturdy shoes for protection.

Here's hoping all your preparations are unnecessary and you still have all those emergency supplies at the end of this hurricane season!

**Oleta Powell, R.N., CDE**

*Diabetes Care Center, South Miami Hospital*



## Child/Parent Support

For children with diabetes under age 12 and their parents, the Child/Parent Diabetes Support Group offers a way for parents and children to interact and share information and coping techniques. It will meet the **first Saturday of every other month beginning August 6, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** at Baptist Children's Hospital. For more information or to register, call Debbie Gillman, R.N., at **786-596-4607**. Participation is free, but you must let us know you are coming.



## Like mother, like son!

Congratulations to **Brian Exelbert** on his election as president of the South Florida Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. A manager at Smith Barney, he is the son of **Lois Exelbert**, administrator of the Diabetes Care Center at Baptist Hospital.

## Highs and lows

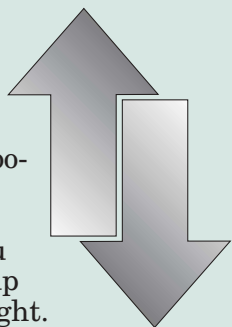
Testing your blood sugar with a meter gives you information for only that moment in time. Having blood tested in a laboratory for a hemoglobin A1c level gives you a three-month average.

But these tests never tell you how your blood-sugar levels go up and down during the day and night. This information is important if you want to maintain a steady level that is best for your health.

The Continuous Glucose Monitoring System at the Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center can provide you with that information. You wear a small device for 72 hours as you go about your normal daily tasks.

When the information is downloaded into a computer, you get a very useful picture of how your blood sugar varies at different times, when it is higher than you want, and when it is lower. You can then work with your physician and diabetes educator to make lifestyle and medication adjustments.

The test costs \$219 and is sometimes covered by insurance. To find out more, call Hilda Santiago or Maria Quintana at **786-596-4930**.



## Diabetes requires summer foot care

*Continued from page 1*

**5. Shoe-shop with care.** Your shoes should be comfortable the moment you put them on and not require any "breaking in." Buy shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are slightly swollen, and wear the socks that you plan to use with them. Bulky socks require bigger shoes. Buy two pairs of shoes and alternate them, allowing each pair to dry naturally for a day before you wear them again.

**6. Consider prescription footwear.** If you have foot deformities, a history of foot ulcers, nerve damage with calluses, or a lack of sensation in your feet, your doctor can prescribe custom footwear. Medicare and many insurance carriers may cover much of the cost.

**7. Check inside your shoes.** Something may have fallen (or crawled!) into them, and if you have neuropathy you may not feel it. Make sure there are no loose pieces of fabric or leather inside the shoe that could rub against your foot. Discard shoes when they show signs of wear.

**8. Wear proper socks.** Change your socks every day. Make sure they are smooth and they don't wrinkle when you put them on. Some people with diabetes prefer seamless socks, but socks with flat, unobtrusive and soft seams are fine as well. Avoid socks with big seams.

**9. Be wary outdoors.** Talk to your doctor about ways to keep your feet warm outdoors in the winter and cool and dry in the summer. Don't use toe warmers, electric blankets or heating or cooling gels on your feet without first talking to your doctor.

**10. Never walk barefoot.** Not even at the beach or pool. Not even in the water. Wear sandals at the beach, and swimming shoes in the water.

Take good care of your feet, and they will take good care of you.

**Ira M. Baum, DPM**

*(Dr. Baum is a podiatrist on the Baptist Hospital and South Miami Hospital medical staffs.)*



## 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, Classroom A.

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

**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.

**Supermarket Tour** — Tour the supermarket with an expert from the Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center and learn to read food labels and make wise food choices. Second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Publix at 107th Avenue and Kendall Drive. Cost is \$50.



**Spanish Support Group** — 3:30-4:30 p.m., third Thursday of the month, at Baptist Medical Plaza at Westchester, 8840 Bird Road.

**BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** — 8900 N. Kendall Drive.

Interested in a Parent/Child Support Group? If so, call Debbie Gillman, R.N., at **786-596-3696**.

**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.

**Available online.** You can read *Diabetes News* online, both in English and in Spanish, at the Baptist Health website, [www.baptisthealth.net](http://www.baptisthealth.net).

Call **786-596-3696** if you would like a friend to receive future issues of *Diabetes News*, or sign up for the newsletter in English or Spanish online at [www.baptisthealth.net](http://www.baptisthealth.net).

*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](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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