

Diabetes

NEWS

Baptist Health Diabetes Care Centers

October–December 2008

Treating diabetic retinopathy

Blindness is one of the terrible complications of diabetes. It usually happens because of a condition called diabetic retinopathy, in which the diabetes damages the blood vessels of the retina, causing vision loss.

“While we do have effective treatments,” said **Zachary Segal, M.D.**, a Baptist Health ophthalmologist who specializes in retina care, “the very best way to avoid blindness is to control blood-sugar levels.”

Early detection and intervention are vital in the treatment of diabetic retinopathy, since the treatments are most effective at saving sight earlier in the disease process.

“It is critical to be examined by a retina specialist within three months of learning that you have diabetes,” Dr. Segal said. “Most people diagnosed with diabetes already have the beginning stages of diabetic retinopathy.”



Dr. Segal said there are few symptoms in the early stages to warn a patient that the condition exists. “Blurred vision may be the first and only symptom, but irreversible damage may already have occurred by that time.”

There are two stages of diabetic retinopathy: nonproliferative (NPDR), which is the earlier stage, and proliferative (PDR), which is the later and more severe stage. In NPDR, loss of vision happens for two reasons, both involving the macula, which is the center of the retina, where detail vision occurs.

The first is macular edema, in which the walls of the blood vessels begin to leak. This causes the retina to thicken, leading to blurred central vision. In the second condition, macular ischemia, the blood vessels break down completely and the retina begins to die from lack

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Carbs are not created equal

...or are they? The evidence is unclear. While it is well-known that some carbohydrates are metabolized faster than others, resulting in higher blood-sugar levels, it is also known that people are very different in how they use carbohydrates. Not everyone reacts the same way.

The glycemic index (GI) offers a meal-planning tool by classifying carbohydrate-containing foods by their effect on blood-glucose levels following a meal. Using a

100-point scale, a GI rating above 70 is considered high, 56-69 is intermediate and 55 or less is low.

Some foods with low GI scores include peanuts, 14; nonfat milk, 32; apples, 38; strawberries, 40; grapes, 46; sweet corn, 54; and brown rice, 55.



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From the Administrator

Diabetes affects many parts of the body, from head to toe, and a new study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) expands the list by finding a correlation between diabetes and hearing loss.

The study tested more than 5,000 people ages 20-69. It found the rate of hearing impairment was twice as great in people with diabetes.

While the information is new, the connection actually is not surprising. We know that vascular and nerve tissues can be damaged if blood-glucose levels are higher than normal.

Hearing depends on the blood vessels working properly in the cochlea, part of the inner ear. If these blood vessels are constricted

or if there is a loss of the outer hair cells (also a sign of vascular damage), then hearing can easily be diminished.

In addition, electrical signals from the cochlea may travel more slowly along the auditory nerve in people with diabetes. This could result in slower processing of complex sounds even if hearing is otherwise normal.

The NIH advises physicians to encourage their diabetes patients to have their hearing tested. One more thing to add to your list!

*Lois Exelbert, R.N., CDE, BC-ADM
Administrator
Diabetes Care Center, Baptist Hospital*



Mark your calendar

Take advantage of these upcoming educational and informational opportunities:

■ **Saturday, Oct. 25 – The Step Out Walk to Fight Diabetes**, sponsored by the American Diabetes Association of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, will take place at **7:30 a.m.** at Bayfront Park in downtown Miami. To join or form a team or for more information, go to www.diabetes.org/stepout or call **1-888-DIABETES (342-2383), Ext. 3012**.

■ **Thursday, Nov. 6 – Can Diabetes Be Reversed or Prevented?** will be presented from **7-8 p.m.** in the Homestead Hospital Auditorium, Campbell Drive (SW 312 Street) and SW 147 Avenue. Speaker will be **Lois Exelbert, R.N., CDE**, administrator of the Diabetes Care Center. The program is free but reservations are required by calling **786-596-3696**.

■ **Saturday, Nov. 15** – The Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center celebrates **World Diabetes Day** with a Diabetes Information and Product Fair. Many diabetes products will be on display. Talks will be given by **Michael Fili, M.D.**, who will speak on “What to Expect From Your Physician,” and **Zachary Segal, M.D.**, speaking on “Understanding Diabetic Eye Disease.” The event takes place **9 a.m.-12 noon** in the Baptist Hospital Auditorium, 8900 N. Kendall Drive, on the third floor of the South Building. The program is free but reservations are required by calling **786-596-3696**. Space is limited.

Tests you can use

The Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center is offering two more diagnostic tests for people with diabetes.

The **Med Gem Resting Metabolic Rate** test assesses how many calories you burn in a day, which is an important factor in proper diet planning. The cost is \$55.

The second test is **Ankle Brachial Index**, which screens for peripheral vascular disease. Many people with diabetes also have heart disease and people with heart disease are also at risk for other vascular disorders. This test can provide valuable information about your circulatory system. The cost is \$25.

No prescription is needed for either test. Insurance does not cover these tests. For more information or an appointment for either test, call **786-596-0510**.

Education at Mariners

The Mariners Hospital Diabetes Care Center is offering a comprehensive 10-hour diabetes self-management education program based on a new system called Conversion Maps. The program includes an hour of individualized assessment and nine hours of group meetings divided into four sessions. The cost of the program is usually covered by Medicare and other insurance. For more information, call **305-434-1036**.



Treating diabetic retinopathy *Continued from page 1*

of sufficient blood circulation.

NPDR is treated two ways that may be used separately or in combination. The first is a low-energy laser applied to the macula to help close leaking blood vessels. The second is to inject medicine into the eye. "This technique is a more cutting-edge approach to macular edema and used often in conjunction with laser. The injections help clear the fluid more rapidly, while the laser treatment can take several months to work," said Dr. Segal.

"These treatments help to stabilize the retina and prevent further vision loss. With the injections, some vision gain can be achieved in about half of the patients."

In the later stage, PDR, large areas of the retina lose circulation. The eye responds by growing new vessels to replace the lost ones. But the new vessels are fragile and they leak, causing such conditions as vitreous hemorrhage (the center cavity of the eye fills with

blood, blocking images from reaching the retina). Scar tissue, which pulls the retina out of position, causing retinal detachment, is another problem, as is neovascular glaucoma, which causes eye pressure to elevate rapidly, resulting in severe pain and loss of vision.

PDR is treated with a high-energy laser in an effort to block the formation of abnormal blood vessels. There is also surgery to remove blood and scar tissue to help stabilize the retina.

Ask your ophthalmologist for a referral to a retina specialist, or call the Baptist Health Physician Referral Service at **786-596-6557**.



New location

South Miami Hospital's Diabetes Care Center recently moved to its new home on the ground floor of 6250 Sunset Drive, on the South Miami Hospital campus. Park in the garage attached to the new Medical Arts Building, and the Diabetes Care Center is right next door. For more information, call **786-662-5168**.

Carbs are not created equal *Continued from page 1*

Intermediate foods include such things as pineapple, 59; ice cream and sweet potato, 61; and table sugar, 68.

Foods with a high GI include whole-wheat bread, 71; white bread, 73; Shredded Wheat cereal, 75; white rice, 79; and baked potato, 85.

But in real-world testing, the results do not always conform to what you would predict using the GI. Some of this may be because people differ in how they metabolize different carbohydrates, and some may be based on the fact that we rarely eat carbs alone. Combinations with other foods may have an impact. Fat and protein can alter a food's effect on blood-glucose levels.

According to the American Diabetes Association, "To date, research has not demonstrated that one method of assessing the relationship between carbohydrate intake and blood-glucose response is better than other methods."

So where does that leave you?

You can try the glycemic index and focus on foods with a low GI, which include foods that are high in fiber, most fruits and unrefined grains. Or you can follow dietary guidelines and choose carbohydrates from fruits,

vegetables, whole grains, legumes and low-fat milk based on a system of carbohydrate counting. This requires using an exchange booklet, measuring cups and scales and other resources as prescribed by a registered dietitian. It is labor intensive.

But however you do it, understand that you will be different from what the charts and graphs predict. It is important to test blood sugar regularly before and after meals, paying attention to how you react to various food choices and combinations. You will begin to recognize patterns unique to you and this will help you manage your blood-sugar levels and stay healthy.

A meeting with a registered dietitian will help you get a head start. For an appointment, call the Diabetes Care Centers at Baptist Hospital at **786-596-3696**, South Miami Hospital at **786-662-5168** or Mariners Hospital at **305-434-1036**.

For information about the glycemic index, go to www.glycemicindex.com.

Diana Bell, M.S., R.D., CDE

Diabetes Care Center, South Miami Hospital



Educational Programs

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

Adult Insulin Pump Support Group — Third Wednesday of every month from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Baptist Hospital Diabetes Care Center Classroom, 3rd floor Main Building (3 Main West). Pump users and family members interested in attending this free group should contact **Raquel Klieger, RPH, CDE**, at raquelk@baptisthealth.net or **786-596-0502**.

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 SW 107 Avenue and North Kendall Drive. Cost is \$50.

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.

Available online. You can read *Diabetes News* online, or sign up for the newsletter, both in English and in Spanish, at the Baptist Health website, www.baptisthealth.net. Call **786-596-3696** if you would like a friend to receive future issues of *Diabetes News*.

BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — 8900 North Kendall Drive.

Parent/Child Support Group — For families newly diagnosed with diabetes, this free support group meets the first Wednesday of every other month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Diabetes Care Center classroom, 3rd floor Main Building (3 Main West), at Baptist Hospital. **Gary X. Lancelotta, Ph.D.**, and **Judy Waks, R.N., CDE**, lead the group. For more information or to register, call **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 — Diabetes education services continue at Tower Medical Building, 151 NW 11 Street, Suite W-201. Call **786-596-3696** to make an appointment.

Diabetes Support Group — 6-7 p.m., first Tuesday of the month, in the Mango Room (Auditorium 2) of the new Homestead Hospital, Campbell Drive (SW 312 Street) and SW 147 Avenue.

MARINERS HOSPITAL — Educational services available in Suite 206 of the Tassell Medical Arts Building, located on the Mariners Hospital campus, Mile Marker 91.5 in Tavernier. Call **305-434-3700** for more information.

Diabetes News is published quarterly for the friends of Baptist Health Diabetes Care Centers. If you'd like to make an appointment at any of our convenient locations, call **786-596-3696** at Baptist Hospital, **786-662-5168** at South Miami Hospital or **305-434-3700** at Mariners 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**

Diabetes Care Centers

8940 North Kendall Drive
Suite 803-E
Miami, FL 33176

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