

For Immediate Release

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November is National Diabetes Month

How about celebrating a special occasion without food for a change? November is National Diabetes Month. It is the perfect time to acknowledge two ways to prevent type 2 diabetes by improving our eating habits as well as our exercise and activity habits. If the current trend continues, it is projected that by 2030 almost the entire nation will be overweight. While that might sound silly, obesity and diabetes numbers are increasing at an alarming rate. Our tri-county area (Branch, Hillsdale, St. Joseph counties) have diabetes rates nearly 25% higher than the rate for Michigan. Undoubtedly, the number of people with diabetes will continue to grow and along with it, the dreaded complications that diabetes can bring with it, including; blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage leading to amputations, heart attacks and strokes.

To add insult to injury, there is an incredibly strong link between obesity and type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes affects 95 percent of the diagnosed cases of this disease. This type was once referred to as adult onset diabetes as typically, individuals over 40 years of age acquired it. Now many of the new cases of type 2 diabetes are being diagnosed in children. Since an estimated 20-30 percent of American children are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight, diabetes is being called an emerging epidemic in youth. It has already achieved that status among adults. The diabetes related complications that children observed in their grandparents may appear in these same children before they grow into adulthood.

Now is the time for action. Celebrate American Diabetes Month (and every month) by increasing your awareness and knowledge of diabetes. Then translate what you learn into daily skills that can help delay or prevent type 2 diabetes. Make sensible food choices; aim for fitness by increasing your activity. Living healthy can be achieved by making small lifestyle changes that become permanent and add up to improved health. The good news is that diabetes can be prevented for many, by losing as little as 7-10 pounds and increasing your physical activity. This can make a positive difference in your health and the way you feel.

Start celebrating American Diabetes Month by forgoing the second helping of food, or “super-sizing” in favor of a brisk walk among the fall leaves. Before you know it, your weight will drop and so will your risk of diabetes. That is something worth celebrating!

New materials have been developed to answer your questions about Diabetes. Attached is a fact sheet that was developed specifically for Southern Michigan that answers questions about diabetes. Please consider using some/all of this information in informing the public about the importance of National Diabetes Month.

This message is brought to you by the Southern Michigan Diabetes Outreach Network (SODON), the Family Services Network of Branch County and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph, Community Health Agency