ΙΑΤΡΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ
"Ο ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΛΟΥΚΑΣ"

APOSTOLOS LOUKAS
MEDICAL CENTER

Apostolos Loukas Medical Centre Programme Patient Education
Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus

Improving the diagnosis and management of chronic diseases of our ALMC ΓεΣΥ beneficiaries.

Type 2 diabetes is a common condition where the levels of sugar in the blood are too high.

It is estimated that there were around 422 million people suffering from diabetes in 2014 with global prevalence rising every year.

What is type 2 diabetes?

It is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin (hormone which regulates the blood sugar in the body), or when the body cannot use the insulin produced effectively.

This leads to the blood sugar in the body rising.

Although there are several different types of diabetes this article will focus on type 2 diabetes (by far the commonest of all types) which can usually be managed in primary care by the GP, sometimes requiring the assistance of secondary care as well.

Why is type 2 diabetes important?

As well as being a very common condition it is also one the leading causes of death worldwide. The world health organisation estimate that diabetes was the 7th leading cause of death worldwide in 2016.

What are the symptoms of type 2 diabetes?

Many people have diabetes without realising. This is because the symptoms of diabetes do not necessarily make you feel unwell.

Symptoms include:

- Polyuria (peeing more than usual)
- Polydipsia (feeling thirsty all the time)
- Feeling tired
- Losing weight without trying to
- Recurrent fungal infections (like vaginal thrush or itching around the penis)
- Wounds taking longer to heal
- Blurred vision
- More frequent infections

Who is at higher risk of getting type 2 diabetes?

- People aged over 40 (over 25 if South Asian)
- People with a close relative with type 2 diabetes (1st degree relative)
- Overweight or obese people
- South Asian, Chinese, African Caribbean or black African

How can we diagnose Type 2 Diabetes?

- If you think you have symptoms that could be due to diabetes or are worried please come and speak to your GP.
- A simple urine dipstick can show high level of sugar in the urine, but it is not enough to diagnose diabetes.
- A blood test to detect the level of sugar in the blood is required to diagnose type 2 diabetes and in people who have no symptoms that blood test will have to be repeated 2 weeks later to confirm the diagnosis.

What problems does diabetes cause?

- Diabetes can affect all parts of the body over time.
- It can affect both the small and larger blood vessels in the body.
- This can lead to 'furring' up of the arteries which can lead to heart disease. It can also affect the blood vessels in the kidneys leading to kidney disease as well as the blood vessels of the brain increasing the risk of strokes.
- By its effects on the small blood vessels it can affect the eye leading to blindness or the peripheral nerves leading to nerve damage and loss of feeling/sensation.

How can type 2 diabetes be prevented?

- Having a healthy balanced diet
- Regular physical activity
- Maintaining a normal body weight
- Avoiding smoking

All these ways can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes

How can type 2 diabetes be treated?

The good news is that type 2 diabetes can be treated, and the consequences/complications can be avoided.

The mainstay of treatment is a healthy low sugar diet, physical activity and regular checkups/screening by your GP to detect and treat any complications early.

Of course, diet and exercise sometimes are not enough, and medications may be required.

There are several different types of oral medications available. Furthermore, there is now the option of injectable medications as well as insulin if required.

Patients with diabetes will need to see their GP for regular checkups. These will include:

- Blood pressure monitoring
- Blood test to check - blood sugar, kidney function, cholesterol, liver function, B12 (if taking metformin for a long time)
- Annual Urine test to check for protein in the urine
- Annual foot check to ensure no microvascular and nerve damage
- Annual eye test to diagnose and treat any diabetic eye complications

If you would like to discuss any of the above further or you would like some more information, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with your GP.

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