

## National Diabetes Week 2017 – *It's About Time*

### Information and statistics

#### Diabetes in Australia

- Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia.
- It is estimated that there are currently 1.7 million Australians living with diabetes – yet only 1.1 million of these people know that they have diabetes.

#### Diabetes in WA

- **On average 29 people diagnosed every day in WA – more than one every hour.**
- There are more than 123,000 people living with all types of diabetes in WA.
- 87% of these people live with type 2 diabetes.
- 10% of these people live with type 1 diabetes.
- 3% of these people have gestational diabetes.

#### Detecting Diabetes

- **Failure to recognise the early symptoms of type 1 diabetes, such as severe fatigue, thirst and weight loss can lead to the life-threatening condition diabetes ketoacidosis (DKA).**
- About one in five people who are newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes only learn they have the condition after presenting to hospital with DKA.
- In the past year, 3186 Australians were diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Around half of newly-diagnosed people are children and adolescents.
- If not recognised in time, type 1 diabetes can be fatal.
  
- **For every person diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, it is estimated that there is at least one other person living with pre-diabetes or undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.** Many people with type 2 diabetes will live with the condition for several years before it is diagnosed.
- In those who are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes, the condition can be delayed or prevented in up to 60% of cases by maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active and following a healthy eating plan.
- Type 2 diabetes is three to five times more common amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience more complications from diabetes than other Australians, with hospitalisations for kidney complications being 29 times higher.

## Comment on the importance of early diagnosis and treatment from Diabetes WA credentialed diabetes educator Rebecca Flavel

Type 1 and type 2 diabetes symptoms development at different rates. Type 1 signs need to be acted on immediately, because if left, people get sick very quickly and need to be hospitalised.

### **The four Ts of type 1 diabetes are:**

1. Toilet – are they going to the toilet a lot?
2. Thirsty – do they have an unquenchable thirst?
3. Tired – are they more tired than usual?
4. Thinner – have they recently lost weight?

Type 2 diabetes symptoms are often “silent” as they can be contributed to other things going on in life which could explain symptoms such as lack of energy, thirst or fluctuations in weight. We know that changes in the body can already be occurring when type 2 diabetes is diagnosed. Taking time to get a diagnosis is the best way to prevent the complications associated with type 2 diabetes.

### **Complications of diabetes include:**

- Eye damage that could lead to vision impairment or blindness
- Kidney damage that could lead to kidney failure or dialysis
- Nerve and blood vessel damage that could lead to foot ulcers and possible amputations
- Vascular damage that could lead to heart attacks or strokes.

*What are the health dangers of “leaving it too late”?*

For those with type 2 diabetes, the longer you live with diabetes and don't know your risk of complications is higher. The main health danger of undetected type 1 diabetes is diabetes ketoacidosis, a heart attack or stroke. For others it could be damage to the nerves of the feet or bloody vessels in the eyes. Type 1 diabetes is a lifelong condition that you do not get a holiday from. Type 2 diabetes is manageable and for some preventable. There is urgency for the public to be aware that type 2 diabetes is just as serious as type 1 diabetes. Getting diagnosed early is the best way to stay healthy.

## What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a chronic condition where body is unable to break down the glucose (sugars) in food into energy because it either does not produce enough insulin or cannot use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert glucose into energy.
- There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational. All types of diabetes are serious and can lead to complications if not well managed.
- In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas does not produce insulin because the cells which make insulin have been destroyed by the immune system. Type 1 diabetes has nothing to do with lifestyle factors. Although it is most commonly associated with young people, it can occur at any age.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body does produce insulin but the insulin is ineffective, or there is not enough insulin, or both. Regular physical activity, a healthy eating plan, maintaining a

'healthy waist' and stress management are the cornerstones of preventing and managing type 2 diabetes.

- Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and goes away as the baby is born. Gestational diabetes puts women at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. 50% of women who have gestational diabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes.
- There is no cure.

### Additional complications of diabetes

- **It is estimated that three out of every 10 public hospital beds in WA are occupied by patients experiencing a complication of diabetes.**
- **People with diabetes are up to four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke.**
- Diabetes is one of the leading causes of kidney disease.
- Diabetic retinopathy affects one in six people with diabetes. This is one of the most common causes of blindness in Australia.

### For more information

- To speak to a credentialed diabetes educator or book an information session, visit [www.diabeteswa.com.au](http://www.diabeteswa.com.au) or call 1300 001 880.
- For all media enquiries, please contact Rosanna Candler on 9436 6215 or email [rosanna.candler@diabeteswa.com.au](mailto:rosanna.candler@diabeteswa.com.au)

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