



INFORMATION & CAREGIVER RESOURCE CORNER

What to know about diabetes

by Laurie Deskavich, Information & Caregiver Resource Center Program Director, LifePath

November is **National Diabetes Awareness Month**. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (CDC), “more than 30 million people in the United States have diabetes, but one out of four of them don’t know they have it.” Diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) disease that affects how your body turns food into energy.

Q: How do I find out if I have diabetes?

A: Ask your primary care physician to test your blood sugar to find out if you have diabetes.

Testing is simple, and results are usually available quickly. The sooner you find out, the sooner you can start making healthy changes that will benefit you now and in the future.

There are three main types of diabetes: Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant).

Type 1 diabetes is caused by an autoimmune reaction that stops your body from making insulin. Type 1 diabetes often develops quickly. It’s usually diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults. If you have Type 1 diabetes, you’ll need to take insulin every day to survive. Currently, no one knows how to prevent Type 1 diabetes.

Risk factors for Type 1 diabetes:

- Family history
- Age

Type 2 diabetes is when your body doesn’t use insulin well and is unable to keep blood sugar at normal levels.

Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes:

- Have prediabetes
- Are overweight
- Are 45 years or older
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with Type 2 diabetes
- Are physically active less than three times a week
- Have ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed more than nine pounds
- Are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian, or Alaska Native (some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are also at higher risk)

You can prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes with lifestyle changes such as losing weight (if you’re overweight), eating a healthier diet, and getting regular physical activity.

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes.

Risk factor for gestational diabetes:

- Had gestational diabetes during a previous pregnancy
- Have given birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds
- Are overweight
- Are more than 25 years old
- Have a family history of Type 2 diabetes
- Have a hormone disorder called polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)



Diabetes Self-Management helps people better manage their diabetes by exploring together with peers topics like stress management, healthy eating, exercise, skin and foot care, preventing and delaying complications, monitoring blood sugar, preventing low blood sugar, strategies for sick days, dealing with depression and difficult emotions, and more. Learn more by contacting the Healthy Living Program at LifePath: 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259. Or go online to LifePathMA.org/events/healthy-living-workshops.

- Are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander

Gestational diabetes usually goes away after the baby is born but increases the risk for Type 2 diabetes later in life. Before getting pregnant, women may be able to prevent gestational diabetes by losing weight (if overweight), eating a healthier diet, and getting regular physical activity.

Be proactive and see your doctor about getting your blood sugar tested if you have any of the following diabetic symptoms:

- Urinate a lot, often at night
- Are very thirsty
- Lose weight without trying

- Are very hungry
- Have blurry vision
- Have numb or tingling hands or feet
- Feel very tired
- Have very dry skin
- Have sores that heal slowly
- Have more infections than usual

Things to remember if you’ve been diagnosed:

- Follow a healthy eating plan
- Get physically active
- Test your blood sugar
- Take prescribed medications
- Monitor your feet, skin, and eyes to catch problems early
- Get diabetes supplies and store them according to package directions
- Manage stress and deal with daily diabetes care

Work with your doctor to manage your diabetes ABCs:

- **A** — the A1C test, which measures average blood sugar over two to three months
- **B** — blood pressure, the force of blood flow inside blood vessels
- **C** — cholesterol, a group of blood fats that affect the risk of heart attack or stroke
- **s** — stop smoking or don’t start

Talk with your doctor about what diabetes self-management education resources are available and to recommend a diabetes educator or nutritionist. You can also search the American Association of Diabetes Educators’ nationwide directory for a list of educators in your community. Learn more at www.diabeteseducator.org/living-with-diabetes/find-an-education-program.

The Healthy Living Program at LifePath can help you manage chronic health conditions like diabetes as well as learn ways to eat healthier, exercise more, and develop healthy habits. For more information, call us at 413-

773-5555 or 978-544-2259 or visit LifePathMA.org/events/healthy-living-workshops.

Remember that eating a healthy diet, being physically active, taking medications if prescribed and keeping healthcare appointments can help you stay on track. Here’s to managing your diabetes.

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A THANKSGIVING OFFERING FOR LOCAL SENIORS

Every year, local seniors age sixty and over and their spouses enjoy a special holiday meal during the week before Thanksgiving at senior dining centers and luncheon clubs across Franklin County and the North Quabbin region.

Menu items for this year's celebrations will include roast turkey with herb gravy, mashed potatoes, breaded stuffing, butternut squash, and a wheat dinner roll, with pumpkin pie or a diet pumpkin pudding for dessert.

Call your local dining center or luncheon club to find out if and when they're participating in the special meal this year and to reserve your spot. You do not have to reside in the community in which you dine.

Athol Senior Center: 978-249-9001

Bernardston Senior Center:
413-648-5319

Charlemont Luncheon Club:
413-339-5720

Erving Senior Center: 413-423-3308

Leverett Luncheon Club: 413-367-2694

Montague Senior Center: 413-863-9357

New Salem Luncheon Club:
978-544-2178

Northfield Senior Center: 413-498-2186

Orange Senior Center: 978-544-7082

Petersham Luncheon Club: 978-724-3522

Phillipston Luncheon Club: 774-262-0952

Rainbow Elders Luncheon Club:
413-773-5555 x1242

Royalston Luncheon Club:

978-249-9656

Shelburne Senior Center:
413-625-6266

South County Senior Center:
413-665-5063

Warwick Luncheon Club:
978-544-2630

"Menu items for this year's celebrations will include roast turkey with herb gravy, mashed potatoes, breaded stuffing, butternut squash, and a wheat dinner roll, with pumpkin pie or a diet pumpkin pudding for dessert."

Senior dining centers and luncheon clubs have been managed by LifePath since 1974. Our many programs offer support to elders, persons with disabilities, and caregivers. Contact us today to learn more about how

our programs can help you. Call 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259 or email info@LifePathMA.org. Read more at LifePathMA.org.

A BOUNTIFUL SEASON: LOCAL SENIORS BENEFIT FROM FARMERS MARKET COUPONS

Every year, people age 60 and older across the Commonwealth benefit from the bounty of their local farmers markets thanks to coupons that make local produce more accessible to families and individuals with low-income.

The Massachusetts Farmers Market Nutrition Program for seniors provides a booklet of ten coupons, each worth \$2.50, to qualifying individuals. The coupons are good from the beginning of the market season in early summer until the end of October and may only be used to purchase fresh unprepared fruits and vegetables, cut herbs and honey.

This year, 625 people were able to be served by those coupons distributed by LifePath.

"It's a great program," says Jane Severance, Nutrition Program director at LifePath, who oversees the coupon book distribution. "People will go to the market and try something new, which is great."

Some people use their coupons sparingly in the early part of the year, waiting for the storage crops to appear in the fall, while others freeze or can items to use throughout the winter months.

The benefit is more than the fresh-picked taste of farmer's market corn-on-the-cob or the sweet, juicy delight of biting into a sun-ripened peach: a 2013 study by the American Society for Nutrition published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that eating five or more



servings of fruits and vegetables a day has the potential to significantly increase a person's life expectancy. Nearly 72,000 men and women between the ages of 45 and 83 reported their daily intake of fruits and vegetable over the course of 13 years. People who did not eat fruits and vegetables had a 53% higher mortality rate than those who ate five servings a day; their lives were shortened by an average of three years. Eating three daily servings increased life expectancy by 32 months on average compared to those who never ate vegetables, and those who ate just one piece of fruit a day lived 19 months longer than those who never ate fruit.

There's no question that Farmers Market Nutrition Program helps seniors access farm-fresh produce and in turn supports the local community. Check out your local market from early summer through fall. Try adding some sun-sweetened strawberries to your breakfast cereal in June. In August, make a ratatouille from plump eggplants, red tomatoes, purple onions, and bell peppers; or roast an orange kabocha squash in October.

Many local farmers' markets accept EBT-SNAP payments, and some even have programs that offer double-value for these purchases. Ask your local farmer's market representatives for details.

To find out more about coupon books for the 2019 season, contact Jane Severance of LifePath at 413-773-5555 x2271, 978-544-2259 x2271, or jseverance@lifepathma.org.

Read more about the Farmers Market Nutrition Program at www.mass.gov/farmers-market-nutrition-program.

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