

## Type 2 Diabetes, A New Approach

Diabetes is reaching epidemic proportions. Nearly twenty-five percent of the population of the United States is either already diagnosed with diabetes, or has pre-diabetes or Syndrome X. Two out of three Type 2 diabetics do not have adequate control of their blood sugar level even while taking medications. For the first couple of years a person has diabetes, almost no symptoms are noted. By the time symptoms are noted, when complications set in, it is even harder to control blood sugar levels and take the necessary steps to remain healthy.

Most diabetics do not regularly check blood levels after the first six months following diagnosis. Many more are not keeping to healthy diet plans or getting requisite exercise. Most patients diagnosed with prediabetes or those diagnosed with the disease find their levels are not under control at their yearly check up. Only when they find themselves taking insulin as well as several medications for insulin sensitivity do they realize the importance of exercise and eating healthy.

Despite all the warnings warning of potentially life-threatening problems resulting from diabetes, most Type 2 diabetics are resigned to their disease and are not controlling it. The medical community is concerned about the seemingly unconcerned response are met with by diabetics who are not managing their disease. There are physical, emotional, and behavioral problems that put people more at risk of diabetes. The profiles of patients with Type 2 diabetes include excess fat around the middle, chronic stress, poor self-esteem, negative emotions, and unhealthy lifestyles. If the patient is not in the habit of taking care of their body, it is difficult to get across the importance of doing so after a diabetes diagnosis. Self-care is not one of the priorities for the average Type 2 diabetic. Most are focused on pleasing those around them and refuse to put their health first. Some don't feel enough self-worth to work on controlling their diabetes despite the fear of life-threatening complications. They find it easier to go into denial or just resign themselves to the disease than to make the effort to manage it. If they do begin down the path to a healthier lifestyle, they often don't stick with it because they don't have the necessary support system. If they have had trouble controlling their blood sugar levels, they get discouraged, which leads to acceptance of the disease, and they quit trying to control it.

The most effective approach is a gradual lifestyle change. Behavioral changes are crucial for the newly diagnosed diabetic to succeed in taking control of their disease. The changes don't always have to be strict or drastic. There can be a gradual change in eating healthier meals, decreasing refined sugar consumption, adding exercise, and getting more sleep. The goal is to empower the patient to make choices that are fun, healthy, and personally motivating. It is important to have a support structure in place to encourage and recognize the diabetic's success.

The bottom line is, the patient has to desire better health. You can't impose good health on anyone. Many who already have diabetes or are predisposed to the disease are struggling with other symptoms of low self-esteem. A group of supporters that understand their issues and suggest better ways to take care of their health may be all that a diabetic needs to aid them taking care of themselves before it is too late.