

DIABETES NZ INITIATIVE TO COMBAT NATION'S FASTEST-GROWING EPIDEMIC

Online toolkit helps people with diabetes take control and live well

Diabetes New Zealand today marks the beginning of Diabetes Action Month by launching a comprehensive online support and self-management toolkit, to help address the nation's fastest-growing health crisis.

Twelve hundred people in New Zealandⁱ, on average, will this month be told that they have diabetes – with more than 120 of those in the Auckland DHB catchment alone.

More than 260,000 people in New Zealand – over 27,000 in the Auckland DHB catchment area have diabetesⁱⁱ; the prevalence has doubled in the past 10 years.

“There is a real need to help people with diabetes to live well,” Steve Crew, chief executive of Diabetes New Zealand, says.

“The reality of diabetes and the complications associated with it, can be consuming. It is not only a drain on our health system, it is incredibly life-changing and life-limiting for people living with diabetes – and that can lead to stress and anxiety and poor self-care.”

Diabetes New Zealand surveyed the nation in a Perceptive Research omnibusⁱⁱⁱ that revealed that less than half of those living with diabetes felt they are in control of their condition, and a third said it had a negative effect on their mental wellbeing.

“Living well is something people with diabetes battle to do on their own,” Crew says. “A third struggle with eating healthy meals, and almost 40 per cent struggle to be motivated and do physical activity. Diabetes New Zealand wants to change that.”

The Diabetes New Zealand Take Control Toolkit unveiled today will be a range of more than 60 online materials in downloadable print or video formats, that Diabetes New Zealand members anywhere in the country can access, offering them advice

and information across three important categories – Food & Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Health & Wellbeing.

Being developed during Diabetes Awareness Month includes:

- Simple ways to test your fitness
- Ways to increase your physical activity
- What makes up a healthy plate
- How to read food labels
- How to care for your feet, skin, and teeth
- Dealing with the stress and depression that diabetes can bring
- Goal setting
- Keeping a food diary
- A 12-week walking plan
- Important health checks
- Diabetes complications such as blindness and amputation.

There will also be tools for friends and loved ones supporting someone with diabetes, ways to involve the family, as well as recipes - including some from NZ MasterChef winner Brett MacGregor - and short physical activity workouts featuring *Shortland Street* cast, to do in the TV ad breaks.

Over the past eight weeks, in the lead up to Diabetes Action Month, a select pilot group of people with diabetes have been the first to use the Take Control Toolkit, and the results have been encouraging, Crew says.

The 12 people – 10 with type 2 diabetes, one with prediabetes and one with type 1 diabetes – have committed to using the Take Control Toolkit for 12 weeks. They have had fitness and medical assessments done at the beginning, and the half-way points, and their physical activity is being monitored through wearing Fitbit activity trackers.

Already they have felt empowered to make significant behavioural changes – “and, importantly, lifestyle improvements”, Crew says.

All of the group reported increasing their physical activity, upping their fruit and vegetable intake while monitoring their carbs and reducing portion sizes. They had

either reduced or are reducing junk food and swapped sugary drinks for water. [NB: See separate one pager.]

“Diabetes New Zealand is on the journey with these participants – and anybody who wants to manage their diabetes or support someone with diabetes.

“We will continue to grow these enduring resources with more videos, more advice from diabetes experts, and more stories of people who have turned their life around.”

As the voice of those living with diabetes, the organisation wanted to gauge the public’s view on the proposition of taxation on sugar and fat in some foods.

Through the Perceptive Research September omnibus, it was revealed that 39% of New Zealanders would change their fizzy drink habits if there was a sugar tax. However, even with a 20% tax, only 19% would buy fizzy drinks less often.

Almost three-quarters, 73%, might reduce how often they eat fast food if a fat tax was introduced, and less than a quarter would alter their purchase frequency if it was a 20% tax.

“That is a significant tax for less to affect behavioural change when so many people living with diabetes are struggling to take control of their condition, and that is why our focus is on providing the Take Control Toolkit.

“However, we will continue to work with grocery and food manufacturers, and the Ministry of Health, to work through mechanisms to tackle the diabetes epidemic.

“The Ministry of Health five-year plan for people with diabetes identified that effective self-management was a priority to addressing this epidemic. The Take Control Toolkit offers a tangible difference.

“Our core focus is on supporting people with diabetes, to help empower them to live well, and encourage them to self-manage their condition. We have seen real change in the trailblazers using the Take Control Toolkit and are confident that we can help people to help themselves, and live well with their diabetes.”

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About Diabetes New Zealand:

Diabetes is our nation's largest and fastest growing health crisis, affecting over a quarter of a million New Zealanders. Diabetes New Zealand is the charity that supports people with diabetes to help them live full and active lives. We provide support and information for diabetes management and prevention and we fund research to help achieve our vision – Diabetes: Contained, Controlled, Cured.

Diabetes New Zealand aims to support all people affected by diabetes to live well through:

- Providing information and support to help people take charge of their health
- Acting as an advocate and representing all people with, or at risk of developing, diabetes
- Raising awareness of diabetes, especially around lifestyle factors that can help prevent or delay type 2 and help manage and control type 1 and type 2.

The Take Control Toolkit is a free resource for Diabetes NZ members. For details please visit diabetes.org.nz/home or facebook.com/diabetesnz

About Diabetes:

Diabetes is an enduring disease that occurs when the pancreas is no longer able to make insulin, or when the body cannot make good use of the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that acts like a key to let glucose from the food we eat pass from the bloody stream into the cells in the body to produce energy.

There are three main types of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes is usually caused by an auto-immune reaction where the body's defence system attacks the cells that produce insulin. People with type 1 diabetes produce very little or no insulin. People of any age can be affected, but it usually develops in children or young adults. People with type 1 diabetes need injections of insulin every day to control the levels of glucose in their blood.

Type 2 diabetes accounts for at least 90% of all cases of diabetes. It can occur at any age and remain undetected for many years. It is often diagnosed following a complication or routine blood test. Often people with type 2 diabetes can initially manage their condition through exercise and diet, however, over time some people will require oral drugs and or insulin. 1 in 4 New Zealanders is estimated to have prediabetes, when the glucose in your blood is higher than normal but not high enough to be deemed diabetes.

Gestational diabetes: This occurs when a pregnant woman has high levels of glucose in her blood. Gestational diabetes is temporary and usually goes after pregnancy. However a woman who has had gestational diabetes has a 50-60% increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Statistics

1. The number of New Zealanders living with diabetes has doubled from 125,000 to 250,000^{iv} in the past 10 years, with 40 new diabetes diagnoses every day. It is believed approximately 90% are type 2.
2. In 2013, the highest rate of diabetes in New Zealand was in the Indian ethnic group (11 percent), followed by Pacific peoples (9.6 percent)^v. Maori are three times as likely to have type 2 diabetes as non-Maori, and are more likely to develop complications^{vi}. Type 2 diabetes is increasingly occurring in Maori and Pacific children under the age of 15 years^{vii}.
3. In 2008 the estimated direct cost for type 2 diabetes was \$600 million per year. The forecast cost of diabetes was predicted to rise to \$1,310 million in 2016/17 and \$1,770 million in 2021/22.^{viii}
4. Of the 582 patients who received dialysis for the first time in 2013, 308 (53%) had diabetic retinopathy attributed as their cause of end stage renal disease.^{ix}
5. It is estimated that almost 500 lower limb amputations will be carried out this year due to diabetes, in 2011 there were 421 and in 2014 it was 455.^x

ⁱ Source: Ministry of Health. 2015. Virtual Diabetes Register <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/diabetes/about-diabetes/virtual-diabetes-register-vdr>

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ⁱⁱⁱ Perceptive Research Omnibus September 2016. 1,004 respondents nationwide.

^{iv} Source : Ministry of Health Virtual Diabetes Register 2014

^v (Ministry of Health 2014f). *Screening, Diagnosis and Management of Gestational Diabetes in New Zealand: A clinical practice guideline*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

^{vi} (Ministry of Health 2014a). *Diabetes Quality Care Standards Toolkit*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

^{vii} In a study by Jefferies et al (2012), the annual incidence of new cases of type 2 diabetes in children under the age of 15 years increased fivefold in the Auckland region from 1995-2007; 90 percent of the new cases were of Maori or Pacific ethnicity. From – Jefferies C, Carter P, Reed PW, et al. 2012. The incidence, clinical features and treatment of type 2 diabetes in children <15yr in a population-based cohort from Auckland, New Zealand, 1995-2007. *Paediatric Diabetes* 13: 294-300.

^{viii} Diabetes New Zealand and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008)

^{ix} Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand 2014. HQSC Atlas of Healthcare Variation/Diabetes Management. <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/news-and-events/news/1674/>

^x Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand 2014. HQSC Atlas of Healthcare Variation/Diabetes Management. <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/news-and-events/news/1674/>