

Diabetes: Sounding the Alert

American Diabetes Alert Day was March 25th. This one-day health observation helps to inform the American public about the seriousness of diabetes.

Diabetes is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood sugar (also known as blood glucose) resulting from inaction or defects in production of insulin, a hormone that helps the body use blood glucose for energy.

Deadly, debilitating, and costly, diabetes affects the lives of millions of people in different ways. Whether it's living with diabetes, caring for a loved one or family member with diabetes, experiencing healthcare costs due to diabetes and related complications, or any combination thereof, diabetes significantly impacts the day-to-day lives of people across the country.

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death, and more than 20 million Americans have diabetes. Of these people living with diabetes, 6 million do not know they have it.

There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 diabetes—which accounts for 5%-10% of all cases of diagnosed diabetes - develops when the body's immune system destroys pancreatic beta cells, the only cells in the body that make the hormone insulin that regulates blood glucose. This form of diabetes usually strikes children and young adults, although disease onset can occur at any age.

Risk factors for type 1 diabetes may include autoimmune, genetic, and environmental factors.

Type 2 diabetes may account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. It usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce insulin.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, prior history of gestational diabetes, impaired glucose tolerance, physical inactivity, and race/ethnicity.

Prediabetes is a condition that raises the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and eye disease. Progression to diabetes among those with prediabetes is not inevitable. Recent studies have shown that people at high risk for type 2 diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by losing 5 to 7 percent of their body weight, eating healthier and exercising.

Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complications.

- Talk to your health care provider about how to manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.
 - Learning how to eat right is an important part of controlling your diabetes. Food such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, dry peas or beans, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese are recommended as part of a healthy diet. .
 - Engage in physical activity for 30 – 60 minutes on most days of the week. Physical activity can help you control your blood glucose, weight, and blood pressure, as well as raise your "good" cholesterol and lower your "bad" cholesterol.
 - Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Call your doctor immediately if you have sores that will not heal.
 - Check your blood glucose and take medicines the way your doctor tells you to.
 - Get routine care. See your healthcare team at least twice a year to find and treat problems.
- (Source: Center for Disease Control)

Case Manage Your Work Injuries

It is in an employers best interest to actively case manage their work injuries. There are many things employers can do from the initial report of an injury to the close of the case.

First and foremost is the personal safety of the injured worker. Always ensure that the injured person gets immediate medical attention. You want your employee to know that you care about his/her well being. If possible, accompany the employee to the medical clinic. Remind your employee to keep his/her medical appointments.

Once the medical needs of the employee are taken care of the employer should do a thorough investigation of how the accident happened. The goal of an investigation is an objective and thorough analysis of the incident that accurately describes the event and its causes and that suggests ways to prevent the occurrence of similar accidents. Your goal should be to prevent the same type of injury from occurring again.

Employers should stay actively involved in the medical treatment of their injured worker. Talk regularly with the medical provider and follow the progress of the injury. You should also talk to the employee on a regular basis to see how things are going from his/her perspective.

Having modified work available for your injured workers is crucial. Preventing loss time injuries is a key factor in cost containment of workplace injuries. HealthFirst Medical can always help those employers who do not have modified work available by enrolling the injured worker in our "In House Modified Work Program". Even though there is a nominal fee, the cost is far less than having the employee on temporary disability.

Employers should work hand and hand with their workers compensation insurance carrier to close their open cases as quickly as possible. If you have open cases that you think are resolved make sure to call your carrier and push them to close the case.

Why Do Post Offer Drug Testing

Why is post offer drug testing vitally important to business management today? Because 74% of all drug abusers are employed! Government studies reveal that 1 out of 6 workers has a drug problem and show that drug abusers on average:

- Cost an employer \$7,00-\$10,000 per employee annually
- Cost companies 300% more in medical costs and benefits
- Are absent up to 16 times more often
- Are 1/3 less productive

In surveys of drug abusers themselves:

- 44% admitted selling drugs to co-workers
- 18% admitted stealing from employers

Many companies have Drug-Free Workplace policies in place, but if your company does not you should start one right away. Your policy should provide for post offer drug testing, reasonable suspicion testing, and post accident testing.

All new hires should be required to pass a drug test. Anyone testing positive for drugs should have their employment offer immediately rescinded.

You should be testing employees for "reasonable suspicion" whenever it is justified by virtue of their display of any performance, behavioral or physical indicators of drug use. Your supervisors and managers should be trained to identify the "indicator" of drug use among their employees. **HealthFirst offers substance abuse awareness training for supervisors. Call 562-926-3440 to set up training.**

Post injury/accident testing is an important part of a total drug testing policy. Any employee who has a work injury or accident should have a drug test and a breath alcohol test. Testing positive can be grounds for termination if so stated in your company policies. Studies on post accident testing show a decline in work related injuries.

(Source: PreEmploymentdrugtesting.com)