

November 19, 2018

FLORIDA HEALTH IN CLAY RECOGNIZES DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH



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Green Cove Springs, - The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Clay County recognizes November as Diabetes Awareness Month, a month set aside every year to raise awareness about diabetes and promote the importance of taking steps to confront diabetes as a critical health issue. The theme for this year is *The Family and Diabetes*, strengthening the role of the family in the management, care, prevention, and education of diabetes.

“According to FL Health Charts, in 2017 Diabetes was the 6th leading cause of death in Clay County. This chronic disease not only affects an individual it does not discriminate against the family of those with Diabetes either. Knowledge is power; therefore, Diabetes Self-Management Education is essential to the continued care and support to our clients,” said FDOH-Clay’s Administrator, Heather Huffman, MS, RDN, LD/N, IBCLC. “Utilizing evidence-based curriculum for health education is recommended to begin in youth and carried into adulthood; teaching Diabetes prevention to children is important for the future of our health in Clay County.”

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled in the last 20 years in the U.S. In Florida, it is estimated that over 2.4 million people have diabetes and over 5.8 million have prediabetes. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in Florida.

There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant). Women with diabetes have more difficulty conceiving and may have poor pregnancy outcomes, so it is especially important for women to be aware of their risk factors for developing diabetes, including having a family history of diabetes as well as age, weight, and physical activity level.

Due to better treatments, people with diabetes are now living longer—and with a better quality of life—than ever before. Healthy lifestyles can also reduce the impact that diabetes may have on your life. A blood test from your health care provider can determine if you have diabetes. Early treatment can prevent serious problems diabetes can cause, such as loss of eyesight or kidney damage.

When your blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes you may be at risk for prediabetes. Prediabetes is a serious health condition that increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and

stroke. Eighty-six million American adults have prediabetes. Nine out of 10 people with prediabetes don't know they have it. Fortunately, making healthy lifestyle choices can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems. A simple blood sugar test to find out if you have prediabetes. Talk to your health care provider if you should be tested.

FDOH in Clay County kicked off Diabetes Awareness month by wearing blue in recognition of World Diabetes Day on November 14th. Our County Health Department encourages patients and their families to monitor their nutrition and physical activity habits as prevention methods. As a way to provide additional information on Diabetes, our Health Educator is currently planning to begin offering self-management educational sessions using the Merck conversation maps (4 – 2 hour weekly sessions) for those who are diabetic and newly diabetic. Weekly sessions are expected to begin early in the new year. The Department is also working with community partners to identify other resources for low or no cost diabetes education classes.

To learn more about diabetes prevention and self-management, visit www.floridahealth.gov/diabetes

For more information about National Diabetes Month, visit [International Diabetes Federation](#) [American Diabetes Association](#) [National Diabetes Month 2018 Toolkit](#)

About the Florida Department of Health

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