DIABETES AMONG US
HAWAIANS MAKE UP 1 IN 5 DIABETICS IN THE STATE

Dayna Pö, who has Type 2 diabetes, holding son Dallas, with her doctor, Dr. Laurie Tom, on right and Dr. Marjorie Mau, whose research has shown that social support plays a role in Native Hawaiians having healthier lifestyles. - Photo: John De Mello

LOOK INSIDE FOR A 4-PAGE INSERT FROM KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS
Before diabetes can be stopped, it has to be identified. What better time to examine diabetes than with 20,000 Native Hawaiians in Hawai’i, than now, when the nation marks American Diabetes Month.

**STOP DIABETES**

Age 45 or older?

•家族 background (Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, African American and Hispanic ancestors) have a higher rate of diabetes than Caucasians. Native Hawaiians have the highest mortality rate when compared with other ethnic groups.

• being overweight (especially around the waist)

• physical inactivity

• high blood pressure

• family history of diabetes

• history of diabetes during pregnancy

**Type 1 diabetes**

• insulin dependent

• typically appears before the age of 21

• genetic basis

**Type 2 diabetes**

• usually appears after 21

• genetic and lifestyle factors

**TYPE 2 SYMPTOMS**

• increased thirst

• increased food intake

• unexplained weight loss

• illness

• irritability

• blurry vision

• extreme tiredness

• extreme hunger

• excessive thirst

• frequent urination (in large quantities) (symptoms usually occur suddenly)

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

• blindness

• kidney failure

• heart disease

• stroke

• severe, painful extremity amputation.

**TREATMENT OPTIONS**

• lifestyle changes and health education

• oral medication

• insulin injections

**Managing diabetes**

• check your blood sugar levels

• take your medications

• exercise

• eat a healthy diet

• keep your doctor's appointments

**TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFESTYLE**

• consider various weight-loss plans

• eat fruits and vegetables with each meal

• read food labels

• exercise

**Diabetes is not your family's responsibility**

• set realistic goals

• be a positive role model

**RISK FACTORS**

• history of diabetes during pregnancy

• age over 45 years

• African American, Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Asian or Pacific Islander

• family history of diabetes

• obesity

• high blood pressure

• high cholesterol

• history of heart disease

**DIABETES AWARENESS**

• November is American Diabetes Month.

• the disease affects 113,000 people in Hawai‘i.

• it is the leading cause of kidney failure, amputations and vision loss.

• is the number two killer among Native Hawaiians.

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What is also proving to be an important factor for Native Hawaiians is having some kind of support system. Dr. Marjorie Mau, Professor of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, has spearheaded several studies including one that had each subject paired with a support person – brother, sister, mother, friend. Mau says, “Our conclusion then was that social support shows promise as a means to improve healthy lifestyles for Native Hawaiian adults with or at high risk for diabetes.” She says a larger trial study called the Diabetes Prevention Program again showed “social support was an important piece of ensuring that lifestyle changes actually had an impact.”

Corporate Hawai’i is stepping up in a supportive role as well, says Lam, the ADA Executive Director. Take for instance Grove Farm Co. on the island of Kaua’i. It supports the Grove Farm Fit Club started by employees two years ago. Vice President Marissa Sandblom says once a week employees will walk or jog the equivalent of 2 miles around the park across the street or play football, volleyball, bon dance or incorporate a community-service project like walking to collect flowers for lei to donate for Memorial Day. After exercise they eat a healthy meal together, one partially sponsored by the company and supplemented by produce from the company garden they maintain.

In turn, Sandblom says, the Fit Club has helped morale. “Some of our best business ideas and sharing of project updates have occurred during the lunch following a workout, and people aren’t taking as many sick days.”

Information for companies and individuals abound through the ADA especially as November is American Diabetes Month. A new movement is kicking off to stop diabetes and you can join it at www.stoppdiabetes.com. You can also go to www.diabetes.org for diabetes facts, symptoms and a test to see if you’re at risk. There is no cure for diabetes, but as Tom, the endocrinologist, says, “The best cure for diabetes is to prevent it. Once someone has diabetes, it is important to control it.”

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