



Huntingdonshire Voluntary Support Group

DIABETES NEWSLETTER MAY 2009

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The Hunts Voluntary Support Group is a branch of Diabetes UK. Registered Charity No. 215199

Dates for your Diary

The Group meets at 7:30pm on the last Tuesday of every month, except August and December, at Buckden Village Hall

Speakers and Events:

26th May
30th June

Andre Buekes
Debbie Brading

Pharmacy Issues
Community Matron

Recent Events

We were fortunate to have Sharon Tillbrook, the Eastern Regional Manager of Diabetes UK, to speak at last month's meeting. She gave us lots of information on what's going on nationally as well as in the Eastern Region. Then, as a surprise to Sharon, We presented her with a cheque for £1,000 to be specifically spent on a research project in our area.

Eaton Socon Fair. The first of our fund-raising projects took place on May Day. John Skull, who ran the plant and book stall for Merv and Sandy Perry will report for the next Newsletter.

Invitations

1. Diabetes UK Eastern Region are looking for groups/clubs that hold coffee mornings etc. Anyone knowing of such please contact me so that contact details may be passed to Eastern Region so that they can try and arrange fund raisers and raise donations.

2. On the 15th of June there will be a PCT meeting at the Priory, St Ives at 2.30pm. Under discussion will be the new countywide Integrated Diabetes Service Proposal. Any member who wishes to attend will be most welcome. The more the merrier.

Health News

Changes to HbA1c Results. The way HbA1c results are reported in the UK will change from 31 May 2011. The results of our HbA1c Tests, which measure blood glucose levels over a two to three months period, will be given in millimoles per mol (mmol/mol) instead of as a percentage. But, to ease this transition, results will be given in both percentage and mmol/mol from 1 June 2009 until 31 May 2011. For most people with diabetes, the current HbA1c target reading is below 6.5%. The equivalent of this will be expressed as 48mmol/mol. But, as usual, you should agree your own target with your healthcare team.

NHS Checks for the Over 40s. Everyone aged between 40 and 74 years in England is to receive a free NHS health check to help catch conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and kidney disease early. The checks which have been available since 1 April 2009 include recording people's height, weight, age and blood pressure, and a simple blood test for cholesterol. In some cases, there could be a test to check blood glucose levels. Following the health check, people will receive an assessment setting out their level of risk and what they can do to reduce it.

Quick Fix Prescriptions Not Necessarily Good. People with type 2 diabetes are being prescribed medication too readily after diagnosis, before giving healthy lifestyle changes a chance. The research, presented at Diabetes UK's Annual Professional Conference studied 652 people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and showed that 36% were prescribed diabetes tablets within one month of diagnosis. Guidelines by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommend, for all people with Type 2 diabetes, lifestyle management only, for a period of time before commencing medications. Figures show that 13% of those in the study who were on medication were already taking two types of tablets.

As a healthy balanced diet and physical activity should always be the foundation of good diabetes management, Diabetes UK is concerned that, in some cases, medication is regarded as the first port of call.

Hypos Linked to Mental Decline. Severe hypos (when blood glucose levels drop dangerously low) may lead to poorer memory and diminished brainpower for people with Type 2 diabetes. The study looked at 1,066 people with Type 2 diabetes aged between 60 and 75 years, with participants completing seven tests to establish their level of brain function; they looked at memory, logic and concentration. The 113 people who had previously experienced severe hypos scored lower than the rest of the group.

Cognitive decline can be a predictor of dementia although this is only in some cases. It has been established already that Type 2 diabetes can increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, which is another type of dementia and this research appears to add another piece to a very complex jigsaw. Much more research is needed before the experts come to any firm conclusions about these early findings.

New Findings Help to Explain Ethnic Differences. South Asians living in the UK have been found to be up to six times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes than white Europeans. Also, while South Asians have increased body fat and a more centralised fat distribution, these differences cannot completely explain why their body tissues are more resistant to the effects of insulin.

Researchers investigated whether a mismatch between the uptake and the 'burning' of fat in muscles contributes to this increased insulin resistance. In an experiment with 16 South Asians and 18 European men of similar age and body mass index there were no significant differences between the groups in how their skeletal muscles burned fat while at rest but during exercise South Asians burned less fat than Europeans.

Researchers next intend to find out which aspects of skeletal muscle function and metabolism are responsible for the differences seen in this study.

And Finally Not more Tommy Cooper jokes!

- ☺ 2 Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly. They lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving that you can't have your kayak and heat it.
- ☺ I went into the butchers and bet him £50 that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf. He agreed the steaks were too high.
- ☺ I was once in a play called "Breakfast in Bed"

Did you have a big role?

No just toast and marmalade!

Your Organising Committee

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