

Diabetes Corner Gazette

For Community Outreach Workers

Vol. 3, No. 2

Signs of Success (Ways To Help You Stay in Good Control)

The goals of weight loss, exercise, good blood pressure and blood sugar control can seem overwhelming to people with diabetes. Small signs of success can be encouraging and inspire patients to move closer to their personal goals for better health.

Fun With Food

Cutting calories by 100 per day can prevent weight gain. Cutting 250-300 calories from your client's usual intake can assist in weight loss.

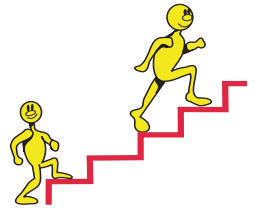
- ◆ Bring calorie counts of favorite and usual foods in your community to a support group or class, and have members choose an item to cut from their usual diet.
- ◆ Suggest lower calorie substitutes for snacks or preparation of meals.
- ◆ Have a recipe contest for lower calorie versions of favorite menu or snack items. Ask a member of the clinic staff to act as the "taste tester judge".
- ◆ Suggestions for curbing appetite include the following: do something physical when the urge to snack occurs, drink a glass of water or tea before meals, start meals with a salad or raw vegetables, put down the fork between each bite, don't use tortillas for an eating utensil.
- ◆ Have a class contest to see who can come closest to guessing a one-ounce serving of chips or cheese by "eye".
- ◆ Compare the cost savings of eliminating sodas, juices, chips, packaged snacks, and cookies/pastries from the grocery store budget. Use real prices from your local market.



Use It Or Lose It

Fitness is a process that can be measured in small steps. Help clients set a goal for more activity by suggesting these options:

- ⊗ Walk to your mailbox, and offer to walk to your neighbor's mailbox to collect the mail each day.
- ⊗ Volunteer to chop the wood and bring in firewood every day.
- ⊗ Call a neighbor and walk your dogs together.
- ⊗ Commit to go dancing once a week.
- ⊗ When putting away groceries, lift the soup and vegetable cans three times above your head before putting them away.



Go online and check out the America on the Move initiative (www.americaonthemove.org). Materials, ideas and sources for low cost step counters are available on their web site.

Organize a step fitness program in your community. Get a map of New Mexico and track how many miles your step counters have walked based on their totals each week.

Teach clients to use their blood glucose logbooks to track blood sugars as well as exercise (how many days, how much time, what type). Practice comparing activity days to blood sugar readings and look for improvements over time.

The Medicine Chest:



When clients offer taking the latest herb or “I’m drinking my pills” as an excuse for not making lifestyle changes for health, inform them of the balance between lifestyle and medication.

- 📖 Help them research questions they may have about herbs or vitamins that claim to cause weight loss or normalize blood sugars with no effort by the patient. Check the library and talk to clinic staff about facts and figures for those claims.
- 👩‍⚕️ Suggest ways in which proven vitamin supplements, herbal teas and remedies might be useful in their personal health programs. Assist them in checking any vitamins, herbs or unusual diets with their primary care providers and advise them to never stop other medication without the advice of their primary care providers.
- 👨‍🌾 Suggest that support group members start a garden cooperative where herbs, vegetables and remedies might be grown and shared with the group.
- 🗣️ One way of proving the value of a supplement or tea in lowering blood sugar is to encourage client to continue with usual medications and blood sugar testing when the herb or tea is begun. If it is working, the blood sugars will come down and patient can discuss the results with his/her primary care provider.

Taking Your Emotional Temperature

Frustration and a sense of failure can sabotage clients’ goals for good health. Help them set small, concrete goals that will guarantee success.

- ☺ Persistence and self-encouragement are the keys to fighting frustration.
- ☑ Remind them that every step towards their health goals counts.
- ☒ Measures of success: improvement in blood sugar readings (even if not target), beginning an exercise program, and not gaining weight.
- 🗣️ Ask clients if they feel more energy, less lazy and improved mood when their blood sugars come down, and discuss positive aspects of these feelings.
- 👉 Encourage client to reward each step towards his/her goal. Examples are getting a new pair of socks or a bright t-shirt after a month of regular exercise.
- 🗣️ When clients list excuses or barriers for not meeting a health goal, help them problem solve a way of eliminating the barrier, or choosing a smaller goal.

What’s New?

America On The Move website for tips, info and ideas to start a “10,000 steps” walking program: www.americaonthemove.org. See if your clinic or recreation program has money to buy step counters or pedometers.

Do some research on the basic guidelines of the Atkins diet and South Beach Diet programs that are in the news. Much of the information is misleading and clients are wondering about their weight loss claims. Also explain the reasons to limit increased protein intake to those at risk for renal disease.

This newsletter was written by Sue Perry, PhD, CDE, in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Health, Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, 2004.



This newsletter contains general information. Always advise clients to seek professional advice before making any changes to their health care regimens.