

LUCY CHAVEZ

Lucy Chavez was diagnosed with diabetes in April of 2005. She remembers being frightened when she found out. About a year before her diagnosis, she lost a sister to diabetes.

“My sister died a year before of diabetes complications. When I was told that I had diabetes, it scared me and shocked me.” Prior to getting her official diagnosis, Lucy says that her doctor told her she was in the “gray area.” She didn't really understand what that meant - now she knows she was pre-diabetic. She wishes she had understood that better at the time.

Lucy had been pretty active before she got her diagnosis. But not long before her official diagnosis, she had to have knee surgery and wasn't able to walk for quite some time. She believes that once she stopped her regular walking, her blood sugar went up. “Because of my knee surgery, I stopped being active and the diabetes kicked in.”

When asked how she got started becoming more active, Lucy says that it was her daughter who inspired her to start. But she also remembers one defining moment that gave her the extra push. “I was walking by a store-front window and saw myself in the reflection. I had gotten so heavy. That got me motivated!”

Lucy says that looking back, in addition to becoming more active, she wishes she had paid a little more attention to the way she was eating. “I should have also been watching my diet.” She thinks that if she had been paying a little more attention to the way she was eating she might not have gotten as heavy and she might have prevented the diabetes for longer.

When asked about obstacles that might get in the way of her walking, she states that her knee was painful for a long time and it was difficult to walk but she did it anyway. The recovery period was longer than expected and it took her longer to get active again, but she stuck with it. She still has pain in her knee at night and sometimes during the day, but she goes on her walks in spite of her pain.

Although the weather is a reason many people give for not walking outdoors, Lucy says the weather almost never keeps her from walking. Lucy also notes that swimming isn't so hard on her knee, so she swims three times a week. She pointed out that by choosing an indoor pool, it's possible to swim even when it's cold outside.

Lucy Chavez is a very determined person. “Once I set my mind to doing something, I do it. I always find a way to walk. I walk all the time.”

Many people like to find a walking buddy, but Lucy prefers to walk alone. “I walk alone because going with someone can be distracting. I think a lot when I walk. It helps clear my mind. I think about my day or any problems I might have. It's my time to think and be by myself.”

Lucy is pleased with the results she gets from walking. “I saw results after six months. My weight went down and I saw my blood sugar drop. Yesterday my blood sugar was 94.”

Lucy's Advice

1. If your doctor says your blood sugar is in the “gray area,” pay attention.
2. If they say you are “pre-diabetic,” start taking care of yourself. Don't wait until you get the official diagnosis.
3. Make time to walk. Just get out there and walk!
4. Don't forget to watch your diet.