

Pre-diabetes: a new name for a growing problem

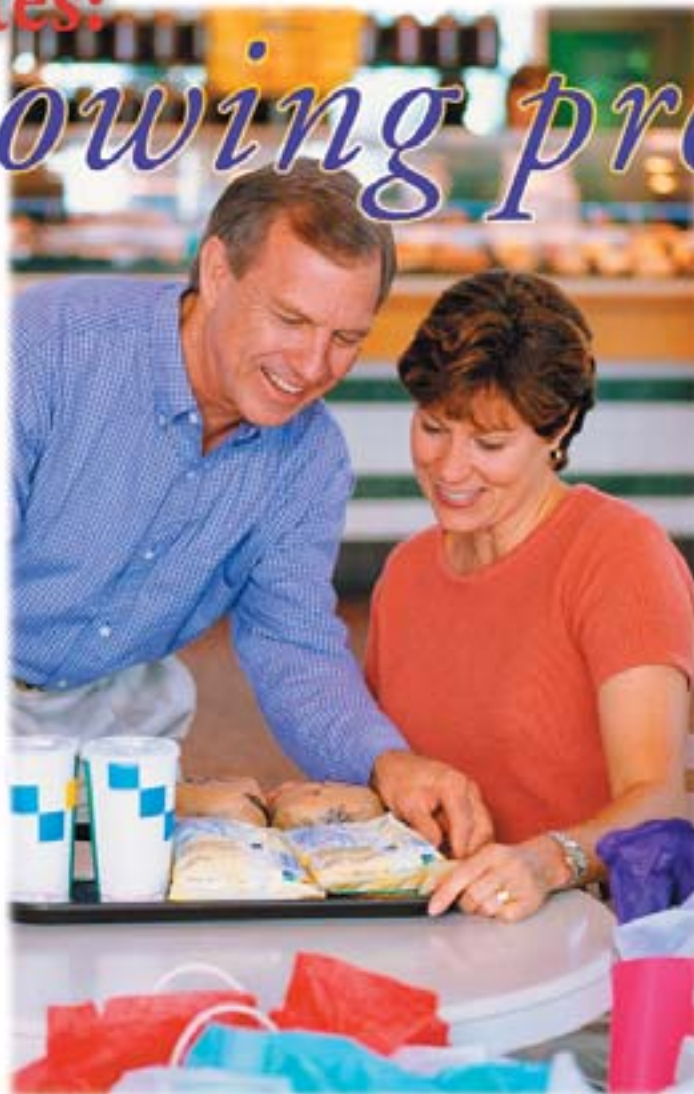
by Stacy Fender

The American public has been put on a health alert. The federal government recently released new guidelines warning all Americans they may be at risk for pre-diabetes, a condition that can cause long-term damage to the heart and circulatory system before blood sugar levels become high enough to be termed diabetes.

Nearly 16 million Americans currently have the condition, formerly known as impaired glucose tolerance. For years doctors have acknowledged people with the condition are at greater risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. The Department of Health and Human Services and the American Diabetes Association hope the new name will impress upon the public the seriousness of the condition.

People with pre-diabetes are generally overweight and lead sedentary lifestyles, which means they are likely to develop Type 2 diabetes within the next decade. In addition, they have a 50 percent greater chance of heart attack or stroke unless they take steps to reduce their risk. The government has issued new testing guidelines for pre-diabetes, so people with the condition can change their diet and exercise habits to prevent it from progressing.

If you fall under the testing guidelines, ask your doctor to perform a simple blood sugar test – either a fasting blood glucose test or an oral glucose tolerance test – to learn if you have pre-diabetes.



their behavior, people with pre-diabetes may even be able to return their blood sugar levels to a normal range.

“Type 2 diabetes is one of the few diseases individuals can make a difference in getting. Individuals who are made aware of the fact that they have pre-diabetes are given a great opportunity to make a positive difference in their health,” says Shellhart.

So talk to your doctor about pre-diabetes, and visit www.coxhealth.com today for more information. ❖

Stacy Fender is a marketing representative for CoxHealth.

The good news is that pre-diabetes can be treated. A diabetes prevention program study recommends a 5 -10 percent weight loss through diet and exercise. Recent studies have shown that losing 15 pounds and walking 30 minutes a day can cut the risk of developing full-blown diabetes in half.

But behavior change is the real key, says Amy Shellhart, Cox Diabetes Center director. Temporary changes aren't enough. “The person (with pre-diabetes) must be willing to honestly examine the current way they do things and be willing to change,” she says. “They must make a permanent change in the way they view food. Avoiding diabetes means a change in lifestyle forever.”

By following the treatment plan outlined by their physician and modifying

Pre-diabetes screening recommendations:

Everyone 45 or older should be tested, especially if they are overweight.

Younger adults should be tested if they are significantly overweight and have another risk factor such as a relative with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes during pregnancy, gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds or belong to a racial minority group. Take the risk test on www.coxhealth.com to discover your diabetes risk.

If test results are normal, retest every three years.

Dedicated to *diabetes*

CoxHealth offers a variety of programs to promote diabetes awareness including the Diabetes Fair, monthly support group meetings and ongoing education through the [Diabetes Center](#) and [Cox Healthcare Foundation's](#) Diabetes Center Fund.

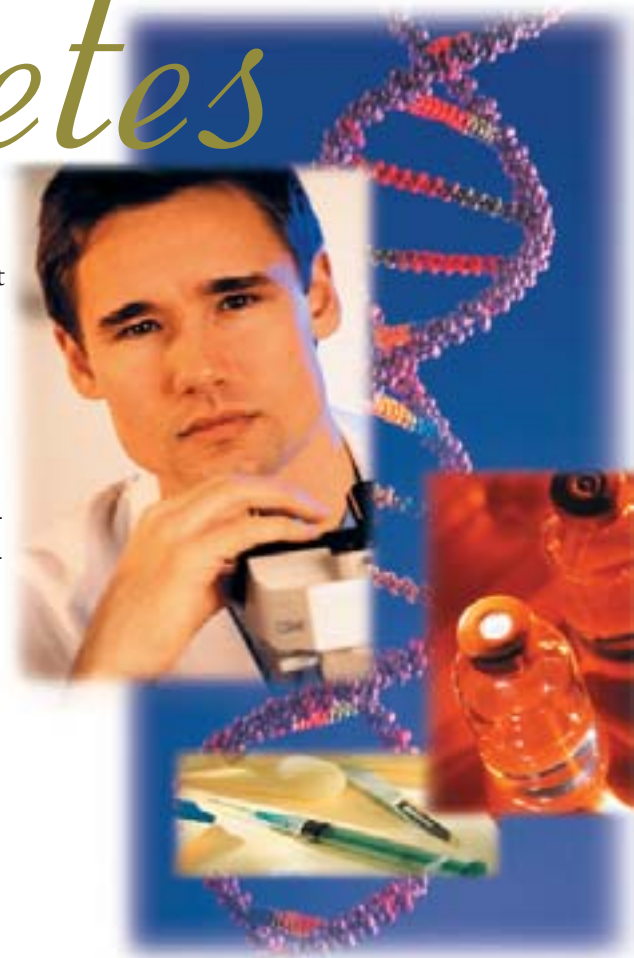
This year's Diabetes Fair, sponsored by the Diabetes Center, will be held Saturday, Nov. 2, in Foster Auditorium at Cox South. The free event will include blood sugar, blood pressure and foot screenings, vendors offering examples and samples of the latest diabetes care supplies, and speakers discussing timely diabetes health issues.

The Diabetes Center Fund helps provide diabetes education classes and counseling to people who do not qualify for Medicare, Medicaid, or who do not have insurance and meet certain income requirements. Education classes offered through the

Diabetes Center include sessions on blood sugar monitoring, insulin self-management skills, exercise counseling, stress management and more.

According to Amy Shellhart, Diabetes Center director, "Diabetes education is important because the majority of diabetes care is self-care: exercise, weight management, monitoring, foot checks. Unless a person realizes what they can do, and the difference doing it makes, they are probably not very likely to do it."

The Diabetes Center Fund was established a year ago and already 24 people have benefited from it. Approved applicants are notified within 24 hours of their acceptance into the program. If you would like to help someone receive important diabetes education, call the Cox Healthcare Foundation at 269-7150. ❖



Do you want to **SUPERSIZE** your order?



by David Dade

Today's food portions are huge and they continue to grow bigger and bigger. So, not surprisingly Americans continue to grow bigger as well. [Obesity](#) is a nationwide epidemic with 97 million adults (54.9 percent) who are overweight or obese. Missouri ranks 10th in the nation for the number of obese people.

Portion size is one piece of the obesity equation. Large restaurant portions,

muffins, candy bars, soda, buffets, appetizers that could serve as an entire meal and fast food are all contributing factors to obesity. Many grocery stores have even adopted the marketing strategy that more food equals more value. Consumers are led to believe they are optimizing their food dollar by getting the larger serving or "value" meal. And it is very easy to fall into this marketing trap. Who wouldn't buy the larger soda, candy or pizza? It costs less than the smaller one ... and that's a great deal, right?

Wrong.

These easy access, often high fat, supersized amounts of food are not good for your weight and overall health. Size up your servings by using the following comparisons:

- 3 oz. meat = size and thickness of a deck of cards
- 1 oz. meat = size of a golf ball
- 1 cup mashed potatoes = size of your fist
(no big hands please)
- 1/2 cup cereal or ice cream = size of a tennis ball
- 1 tsp. of butter = size of the tip of your thumb
- 1 oz. cheese = size of four dice.

Being overweight has associated health risks including hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, sleep apnea, cancer, arthritis/joint pain and gallbladder disease, just to name a few. Achieving a desirable body weight can assist in preventing many of these conditions.

To help maintain a healthy weight try planning meals by writing a menu. Be aware of what you eat and how much you are eating by keeping a food diary. Control emotional eating and learn to manage special occasions such as holidays, weekends and eating out while traveling. Incorporate at least five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables into your diet, and exercise regularly. Applying sensible portion control and weight management techniques will help you achieve better health and wellness. ❖

David Dade is a registered dietitian for CoxHealth.