

Diabetes Leads Patient to a Healthier Lifestyle

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One in three Americans who have diabetes are unaware that they have the disease. It is a disease that affects seven percent of the population, or 20.8 million people in the United States. Diabetes is a disease in which the body doesn't produce or properly use insulin.

Greg Sanchez, 41, was one of those people who was completely unaware that he had diabetes until he ended up in Urgent Care.

"I was very dehydrated because I was urinating 25 to 30 times a day," said Sanchez. "My doctor tested me for diabetes and the results really surprised me."

"He may have had diabetes for more than 12 years and was never diagnosed until now," said Dustin Lillie, MD, Medical Director, UC San Diego Scripps Ranch Clinic.

"Dr. Lillie worked with me, taking a great deal of time to put together a treatment plan I could follow," said Sanchez. "I email him my blood sugar levels weekly and he emails me back with suggestions about what to change or do differently with my diet and exercise program."

Weight gain is one of the risk factors and side effects of diabetes and Sanchez had gained more than 25 pounds in the past six months.

"Diabetes and obesity sometimes go hand-in-hand and are reaching epidemic numbers in Americans," said Lillie.

"Keeping your weight under control is one of the most important ways to head off or control diabetes," said Sanchez. "I'm working on losing weight."

Now when Sanchez visits the grocery store his 15 year-old-son Chris joins him and counsels him on what foods to buy.

"My son is now aware that he could develop diabetes because it is hereditary; so he watches what I eat from diabetic chocolate to a wheat bun instead of white bread," said Sanchez.

Now Sanchez feels things are falling back into place and he is feeling better.

There are two types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

In Type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin. Insulin is necessary for the body to be able to use sugar and sugar is the basic fuel for cells in the body. Insulin takes the sugar from the blood into the cells.

In Type 2 diabetes, the body is insulin resistant so it doesn't properly use insulin. Most Americans are diagnosed with diabetes Type 2.

Diabetes is most common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Symptoms of diabetes Type 2 include:

- → Frequent urination
- → Excessive thirst
- → Extreme hunger
- → Unusual weight loss
- → Increased fatigue
- → Irritability
- → Blurry vision

Working with your physician can help to keep your diabetes under control. The most common ways to help manage diabetes is through weight loss, staying active and exercise, and eating low-fat meals rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods.

Diagnosis and management of diabetes is important because left untreated, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, or limb amputation.

Working together with your doctor, you can take control of your health, your weight and diabetes.

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