

Health Matters

Natural Paths to Healthier Living

The Georgetown Naturopathic Wellness Centre

Fall 2006

Diabetes – An Epidemic

There are two main types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is referred to as early onset and contributes to about 5 to 10 percent of all diabetes. It is primarily diagnosed in children and young adults who are unable to secrete enough insulin. This disease is not reversible and its cause is autoimmune in nature.

In Canada alone, the number of people with diabetes is projected to increase from approximately 1.4 million in 2000 to 2.4 million in 2016.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type and represents 90 to 95 percent of all cases. The majority of type 2 diabetes is lifestyle induced. However, some people more easily develop diabetes because of a familial tendency. Most type 2 diabetics produce enough insulin but have developed resistance to normal insulin action in their tissues. This condition may more correctly be called "insulin resistance". A smaller portion of type 2 diabetics do not produce enough insulin as well as being resistant to what they do produce.

Insulin resistance takes years to develop before progressing into frank diabetes and this is where the condition is identified and best treated naturopathically.

Long before developing insulin resistance and diabetes, most people have what we call "dysglycemia" - poor blood sugar control due to poor dietary choices, chronic stress and a sedentary lifestyle. As blood sugar swings, a person may experience fatigue after eating, mood swings, insomnia, weight gain and low energy. Unfortunately, insulin resistance then starts to develop and blood sugar levels start to

rise. Naturopathically, we treat this pre-diabetic state by controlling the amount of glucose going into the blood stream, increasing the cells sensitivity to insulin and controlling the amount of insulin being produced by the pancreas. This is achieved through weight control, stress management, daily exercise, herbal medicine and certain vitamins and minerals. This regimen is different for each patient depending on their individual needs.

Type 2 diabetes has huge consequences for the duration and quality of a person's life. Chronic complications of type 2 diabetes include blindness, nerve damage, amputations, heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

Due to the chronic complications of diabetes, the life expectancy of a diabetic is 30-50% less than for a non-diabetic from the time of diagnosis.

If you or a person you love is at risk for the development of diabetes, or has already been diagnosed, seek the help of a Naturopathic Doctor. Our focus on preventative medicine and lifestyle-induced chronic disease, makes us an integral part of your health care team.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Both of our Osteopathic interns have returned from maternity leave. Genevieve Stewart R.M.T. and Sandy Charlton C.A.T. are once again accepting patients.

COLD AND FLU KITS HAVE ARRIVED!

Swiss Chard with Lemon-Garlic

(adapted from "Fine Cooking Fresh")

Swiss chard is similar to spinach and packs an equally nutritious punch! This delicious recipe will help increase the green in your diet.

2 lb swiss chard (2 bunches) well rinsed, patted dry with thick stems removed
2 Tbs olive oil
2 tsp minced garlic
Celtic sea salt (or other good quality salt)
Pinch of chilli flakes

Dressing:

2 tsp grated lemon zest
1 small chopped garlic clove
2 Tbs. minced fresh parsley

Roughly chop the swiss chard to get 4-inch pieces. Saute the swiss chard in the olive oil a handful at a time until the leaves are wilted and shrinking. Add the garlic and salt, cover and cook on low, for about 4 minutes. While this is cooking make the dressing in a small bowl. Now remove the lid, increase the heat and add the chilli flakes. Saute for about 2 more minutes and then transfer to a serving dish. Toss the swiss chard with the lemon garlic dressing and serve immediately.

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Learning about Blood Sugar: Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load

Understanding the glycemic index and the glycemic load of foods is critical in the management and prevention of diabetes. Glycemic index is a scale that measures the specific rate at which glucose from food enters into the bloodstream. Foods are divided into three categories--low, medium, and high glycemic foods. Carbohydrates are a healthy food choice as long as they are ranked low-to-medium on the glycemic index. For the most part, all veggies (except potatoes), most fruits (not dried fruit), whole grains and beans are ranked low-to-medium on the scale. Processed foods such as white bread, white flour, cereals, pretzels, muffins, candy, soft drinks, and breakfast bars are ranked high.

Calculate Glycemic Load

*Glycemic Index ÷ 100, multiplied by
the carbohydrate content.*

Glycemic load considers a food's glycemic index as well as the amount of carbohydrates per serving. The glycemic load is important because it takes us one step further in managing blood sugar. For example, carrots—a highly nutritional food, have a high glycemic index (71). Yet a carrot has only 4 grams of carbohydrates, therefore, the glycemic load is low and carrots are a healthy food for diabetics. Let's look at another example: one cup of cooked white pasta—the glycemic load is 71, but contains 40 grams of carbohydrates. As you can see, pasta has a high glycemic load because it is so dense in carbohydrates.

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