

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY ONE "BODY" AT A TIME

Wellness Program of the African People's Education & Defense Fund, Inc.
1327 Dr. ML King (9th) Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705 (727) 821-2437

September 2004

Diabetes: A Silent Epidemic

A global epidemic of diabetes is raging all around us. According to the World Health Organization, about 17.7 million people in the United States now have what is called type 2 diabetes, and that number is expected to double by the year 2030. Diabetes is the fifth deadliest disease in the United States, and it has no cure.

Approximately 2.7 million or 11.4% of all African Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes. However, one-third of them do not know it. Researchers have found that many people have diabetes and don't realize it, while others are pre-diabetic and also unaware of their condition.

If left unchecked, diabetes can wreak havoc on your cardiovascular system and cause kidney disease, blindness, pregnancy complications, amputations, sexual difficulties and reduced immune-system function. But you can do a lot to encourage this quiet epidemic to pass you by.

Diabetes Disproportionately Affects the African Community

- African Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.
- 25% of African Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 have diabetes.
- 25% of African American women over 55 years of

age has diabetes. Physical activity is a strong protective factor against Type 2 diabetes. Researchers suspect that a lack of exercise is one factor contributing to the unusually high rates of diabetes in older African-American women.

- African American women have an 80% higher rate of gestational diabetes (developed during pregnancy, in about 2-5% of all pregnant women). Once a woman

has had gestational diabetes, she has an increased risk of developing gestational diabetes in future pregnancies. In addition, experts estimate that about half of women with gestational diabetes regardless of race develop Type 2 diabetes within 20 years of the pregnancy.

- Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death for African Americans aged 45 to 64, and the third leading cause of death for those aged 65 and older in 1990. Diabetes is more dangerous for African-American women, for whom it was the third leading cause of death for all ages in 1990. Diabetes death rates may actually be higher than these studies show for two reasons. First, diabetes might not have been diagnosed. Second, many doctors do not list diabetes as a cause of death, even when the person was known to have diabetes.

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~
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**APEDF Wellness Center
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Diabetes Complications Also Disproportionately Affect African People

The most life-threatening consequences of diabetes are heart disease and stroke, which strike people with

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diabetes more than twice as often as they do others. Adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates 2 to 4 times higher than those without diabetes.

African Americans experience higher rates of at least four serious complications of diabetes: cardiovascular (heart) disease, blindness, kidney failure, and amputation. They also experience greater disability from these complications. Some factors that influence the frequency of these complications, such as delay in diagnosis and treatment of diabetes, denial of diabetes, abnormal blood lipids, high blood pressure, and cigarette smoking, can be influenced by proper diabetes management.

Cardiovascular (Heart) Disease

Heart disease strikes people with diabetes more than twice as often as it strikes people without diabetes. People with diabetes are five times more likely to suffer strokes and once having had a stroke, are two to four times as likely to have a recurrence. Deaths from heart disease in women with diabetes have increased 23% over the past 30 years compared to a 27% decrease in women without diabetes. Deaths from heart disease in men with diabetes have decreased by only 13% compared to a 36% decrease in men without diabetes.

Kidney Failure

African Americans experience kidney failure, also called end-stage renal disease (ESRD), from 2.6 to 5.6 times more often than white Americans. Interestingly though, hypertension, not diabetes, is the leading cause of kidney failure in black Americans. Hypertension accounts for almost 38 percent of ESRD cases in African Americans, whereas diabetes causes 32.5 percent. In spite of their high rates of the disease, African Americans have better survival rates from kidney failure than white Americans.

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, accounting for 43% of new cases. Ten to 21% of all people with diabetes develop kidney disease. In 2000, 41,046 people with diabetes initiated treatment for kidney failure, and 129,183 people with diabetes underwent dialysis or kidney transplantation.

Visual Impairment

The frequency of severe visual impairment is 40 percent higher in African Americans with diabetes than in white Americans. African Americans are twice as likely to suffer from diabetes-related blindness. Compared to white women, black women are three times more likely to become blind from diabetes. African-American men have a 30 percent higher rate of blindness from diabetes than white American men.

Diabetic retinopathy (abnormalities of the small blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes, such as weakening of blood vessel walls or leakage from blood vessels) may occur more frequently in African people in the U.S. because of their higher rate of hypertension.

Amputations

African Americans undergo 1.5 to 2.5 more diabetes-related lower-limb amputations than white or Hispanic Americans. One study of 1990 U.S. hospital discharge figures showed amputation rates for African Americans with diabetes were 19 percent higher than for white Americans. In a 1991 California study, however, African Americans were 72 percent more likely to have diabetes-related amputations than white Americans, and 117 percent more likely than Hispanic Americans.

Diabetes is the most frequent cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations. The risk of a leg amputation is 15 to 40 times greater for a person with diabetes. More than 60% of nontraumatic lower-limb amputations in the U.S. occur among people with

diabetes. Each year, 82,000 people lose their foot or leg to diabetes.

Reducing Your Risk of Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes, so-called adult onset diabetes, usually strikes people over the age of 30, although the incidence among kids has grown greatly. (This rising rate is thought to be linked to children's lack of exercise and increase in weight).

Type 2 diabetes cuts down the amount of insulin produced by the pancreas, or may make the body less responsive to the insulin that is present. Insulin is a hormone-like substance that speeds the removal of sugar from the blood. During diabetes, blood sugar climbs and causes serious physiological damage.

Fortunately, you can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by changing your lifestyle. Studies have shown that a diet which helped people lose weight, combined with a consistent exercise program, significantly reduced the chances of developing diabetes. There are definitely effective steps that people can take for themselves to hold off the progression of type 2 diabetes.

High-Protein Approach

A study in Australia found that when people with diabetes used a high-protein, low-carb diet to lose weight, enjoyed improved heart health and lost more fat around the middle. They also reduced their LDL (bad) cholesterol.

The researchers concluded that "the greater LDL cholesterol reduction in both [men and women] on the high-protein diet suggest that it is a valid diet for reducing cardiovascular disease risk in type 2 diabetes." (If you already have diabetes, consult your health care practitioner before going on any kind of special diet, and use special care if you have kidney problems.)

Shape: Are You an Apple or a Pear?

America's increasing girth has increased our risk for diabetes. Where you store body fat influences your chances for developing diabetes. Those who store fat in the upper half of their bodies and

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All People's TyRon Lewis Community Gym Guide to Great Fitness



1327 - 9th Street So.
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The Benefits of Whey Proteins

*By Damon Reio, Manager,
All People's TyRon Lewis
Community Gym*

Physical fitness and nutritional awareness goes hand in hand when you are trying to build muscle and an overall fitness capacity. Quite often our diets may not provide us with the daily nutritional needs, therefore it is important for us to provide our bodies with vitamins and supplements in order to avoid malnutrition and muscle loss.

The Role of Protein

Protein is a macronutrient that everyone who comes to the gym should be critical of in order to maintain their gains and levels of improvement.

Whey protein is an excellent protein choice for individuals of all ages who value the role of a healthy diet in helping to maintain and improve their health.

Whey protein isolate, the purest form available, is unsurpassed as a source of the essential amino acids required in the daily diet. Essential amino acids are the building blocks for healthy muscles, skin, nails and other body tissue.

Physical Performance

Whey protein has long been considered the "Gold Standard" of



protein for serious athletes who work hard to develop and sustain a lean, strong and well-defined physique. Research studies support this belief. Athletes need more protein in their diet, often as much as twice the recommended daily allowance. The protein they choose makes a difference and here are several reasons why whey protein is a preferred choice for athletes of all types.

- Whey protein is a naturally complete protein, meaning that it contains all of the essential amino acids required in the daily diet. It has the ideal combination of amino acids to help improve body composition and enhance athletic performance.
- Whey protein is a rich source of branched chain amino acids (BCAAs), containing the highest known levels of any natural food source. BCAAs are important for athletes since unlike the other essential amino acids, they are metabolized directly into muscle tissue and are the first ones used

during periods of exercise and resistance training. Whey protein provides the body with BCAAs to replenish depleted levels and start repairing and rebuilding lean muscle tissue.

- Whey protein is an excellent source of the essential amino acid, leucine. Leucine is important for athletes as it plays a key role in promoting muscle protein synthesis and muscle growth. Research has shown that individuals who exercise benefit from diets high in leucine and have more lean muscle tissue and less body fat compared to individuals whose diet contains lower levels of leucine. Whey protein isolate has approximately 50% more leucine than soy protein isolate.
- Whey protein is a soluble, easy to digest protein and is efficiently absorbed into the body. It is often referred to as a "fast" protein for its ability to quickly provide nourishment to muscles. Whey protein helps athletes maintain a healthy immune system by increasing the levels of glutathione in the body.

Glutathione is an anti-oxidant required for a healthy immune system and exercise and resistance training may reduce glutathione levels. Whey protein helps keep athletes healthy and strong to perform their best.

Join the Walkers and Joggers Club

Join the Walkers and Joggers Club today and take control of your health forever. We are a group of individuals who walk two miles as a team every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:30 AM and 6:30 PM. Occasionally, members get together as a group on other days such as Saturday and walk as well.

Our club is a support group that calls our members if they need a wake up call, or if folks have not come for some time. We are interested in hosting monthly events such as races and walk-a-thons.

Cardiovascular fitness is very beneficial because it lowers cholesterol levels, which

aids against the onset of hypertension and heart disease, and builds a healthy heart. People who are in the Walkers and Joggers Club are also burning excess calories that contribute to obesity. Most importantly, it is motivational and fun for everyone.

If you are a member of a fitness center and need to break the monotony of the everyday treadmill routine, come to Bartlett Park and enjoy the early morning breeze and scenery.

Join the Walkers and Joggers Club today and be part of the fun that will benefit you and your body!

THE WALKERS AND JOGGERS CLUB IS BACK!



- Are you tired of walking on a treadmill?
- Looking for something different to do?
- Want to experience the outdoors?

Walk with others like yourself for safety, motivation, and to take control of your health!

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For details call 727-824-5670

JOIN TODAY!

The Key to Controlling Your Weight: Keeping Energy Intake and Output in Balance

The key to weight control is keeping energy intake (food) and energy output (physical activity) in balance. When you consume only as many calories as your body needs, your weight will usually remain constant. If you take in more calories than your body needs, you will put on excess fat. If you expend more energy than you take in you will burn excess fat.

Exercise plays an important role in weight control by increasing energy output, calling on stored calories for extra fuel. Recent studies show that not only does exercise increase metabolism during a workout, but it causes your metabolism to stay increased for a period of time after exercising, allowing you to burn more calories.

How much exercise is needed to make a difference in your weight depends on the amount and type of activity, and on how much you eat. Aerobic exercise burns body fat. A medium-sized adult would have to walk more than 30 miles to burn up 3,500 calories, the equivalent of one pound of fat. Although that may seem like a lot, you don't have to walk the 30 miles all at once. Walking a mile a day for 30 days will achieve

the same result, providing you don't increase your food intake to negate the effects of walking.

If you consume 100 calories a day more than your body needs, you will gain approximately 10 pounds in a year. You could take that weight off, or keep it off, by doing 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily. The combination of exercise and diet offers the most flexible and effective approach to weight control.

Since muscle tissue weighs more than fat tissue, and exercise develops muscle to a certain degree, your bathroom scale won't necessarily tell you whether or not you are "fat." Well muscled individuals, with relatively little body fat, invariably are "overweight" according to standard weight charts. If you are doing a regular program of strength training, your muscles will increase in weight, and possibly your overall weight will increase. Body composition is a better indicator of your condition than body weight.

From: Fitness Fundamentals hoptechno.com

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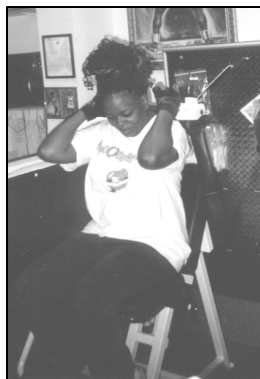
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Sunday 12 - 4 PM

Tips on How to Gain Weight and Muscle

*By Damon Reio, Manager,
All People's TyRon Lewis
Community Gym*

As you probably know, weight gain is something that isn't easy to do. An genetic "ectomorph" is a "skinny body type" with a fast metabolism which makes gaining weight difficult.

The key to weight gain is to think and do everything BIG. You have to eat big, to lift big, to get big. Say that over and over again in your head until you fully understand it.

A lot of people think weightlifting is the key to gaining weight, and I won't argue, it is an extremely important part. BUT, there is another thing that is just as important when it comes to how to gain weight, and that is your diet.

Five Simple Steps to Gain Weight:

1) Take into deep consideration of the amount of calories you consume. Count how many calories you eat in a normal day. Don't change anything, just eat like you normally would and count how many calories you consumed. This is an extremely important step, so try to be as exact as possible. Also, weigh yourself.

2) Starting the day after you counted calories, eat 500 calories MORE than you normally do. For example,

let's say that the day you counted calories you counted 2,000. For the rest of the week, you would now eat 2,500 calories a day. At this rate, you will gain at least one pound per week. Instead of eating 3 big meals a day or eating all day all the time, spread those calories out over 5-6 smaller meals. Eat one meal every 2 and a half to 3 hours. To get big, you have to eat big! Remember that.

3) Start Weightlifting. Get in to the All People's TyRon Lewis Gym and lift consistently. This is another important step to gain weight, so make sure you are doing it correctly.

4) At the end of that week, weigh yourself. You'll notice you're gaining just after one week. Now, don't expect to see a 10 lb. increase. Gaining any more then 2 pounds a week is unhealthy and means you're putting on way too much fat. So look for a 1 or 2 pound gain at the end of the week. Don't sound like much? You can be gaining 5-8 pounds a month!

5) Here's an important one. At some point, you will stop seeing weight gain. At this point, you will have to eat even more. So when you stop gaining for at least 2 weeks, it means it is time to start eating an extra 250 calories a day. Every time you see you haven't gained weight for at least 2 weeks, add an extra 250 calories.

More Tips To Gain Weight (extremely important)

• **STAY AWAY FROM FAT.** Even though weight gain is your goal, you don't want to be gaining fat. Get rid of the chips and candy. No more fast food, nothing fried. Stick to high protein low fat foods like tuna fish (and other seafood), chicken breast, turkey, lean meats, fruits and vegetables etc.

• **DRINK WATER.** Drink around a half gallon a day, more if you can. Yes that's a lot of water, but it's water that will give you the energy you need to gain that weight.

• **SLEEP.** Yes, sleep! The easiest, yet most over looked step. Get at least 8 hours of sleep a night. Your going to need it.

Now the concern some people have about how to gain weight, is how to do it without putting on extra fat. Let me tell you how, YOU CAN'T! Unless you are using steroids, it is basically impossible to gain weight without putting on a little bit of extra fat.

Your routine should be split into phases: in the first phase, focus on gaining weight for 8-12 weeks, then for 4-6 weeks in phase two, focus on fat burning techniques such as including cardiovascular exercise in your routine, or eating less foods high in saturated fat and simple carbohydrates.

Diabetes Epidemic, Continued From Page 2

around the stomach (apple-shaped) are at higher risk for diabetes than those who store fat in the hips, thighs and buttocks (pear-shaped). For men, unhealthy fat storage often takes the form of a potbelly. For women, the riskiest fat storage centers are in the midriff area, forming the midriff bulge at the waist.

According to researchers, stress plays an influential role in where your body fat accumulates. Central fat, fat stored in the abdominal area, is encouraged by the stress hormone cortisol.

Cortisol is released when our bodies respond to stressful situations or events, and some people excrete much more cortisol than others. Women with a high waist-to-hip ratio are especially vulnerable to the effects of stress and have greater abdominal fat storage. Central fat is one of the warning signs for a prediabetic condition called the metabolic syndrome.

Fighting Back With Fitness

Exercise also improves the blood sugar levels of people who either are at risk of diabetes or already have the disease. Physical activity helps the body take glucose (blood sugar) out of the bloodstream.

If you have diabetes and you want to exercise:

- Discuss your exercise program with your health practitioner
- Double check your blood sugar before and after exercise
- Wear properly fitting shoes to prevent blisters or sores
- Stay hydrated and drink plenty of fluids
- Warm up before strenuous exercise and cool down for 5 to 10 minutes at the end of an exercise session
- Keep an energy bar or other snack handy in case your blood sugar drops

Take Your Multi for Protection

Research shows that if you have diabetes you can boost your immune system by taking a daily multivitamin/mineral. A study at the University of North Carolina

that involved 130 adults with type 2 diabetes found that they suffered fewer infections when they took vitamins. After a year of taking multi vitamins, only 17% of the people with type 2 diabetes suffered infections, compared with 93% of the people who didn't take supplements.

The investigators involved in this study believe that a multi would be useful for anyone who doesn't get all the nutrients they need from their meals – and that probably includes just about everyone.

In a related study, researchers found that antioxidants reduce oxidative stress in people with diabetes. Oxidative stress increases damage to tissues, boosts inflammation and speeds up aging. In people with diabetes, oxidative stress also damages the insulin-producing tissues in the pancreas.

Vitamins A, C, and E were shown in this research to help rid the body of free radicals (tissue damaging molecules) that can cause physiological problems. People who have diabetes are prone to shortages of vitamin C. Other helpful nutrients are fish oils, chromium, and the herb fenugreek.

Warning Signs of Metabolic Syndrome

You have the metabolic syndrome if you show at least three of five red-flag indicators:

- Fasting blood sugar of 100 or more (diabetes starts at 125)
- Blood pressure of 130/85 or above
- Triglyceride (blood fat) of 150 +
- Waist circumference of more than 40 inches for men or 35 inches for women
- HDL (good) cholesterol below 50 in women and below 40 in men

Not surprisingly, the main causes of metabolic syndrome are the same culprits implicated in diabetes: poor diet and little exercise.

Preventing Diabetes Complications

Education, and taking personal responsibility and action, is critical for people with diabetes to reducing their risk for complications. People need to be educated about the disease, learn and practice the skills necessary to better control their blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and receive regular checkups from their health care team.

Smokers should stop smoking, and overweight African Americans should develop moderate exercise regimens under the guidance of a health care provider to help them achieve a healthy weight.

Health care providers need to be better trained with the latest information on diabetes to help ensure early detection and appropriate treatment of the serious complications of the disease.

Here are statistics that show how to greatly reduce the risk of complications:

- **Glucose control.** Improved blood glucose control benefits people with either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. For every 1 point reduction in A1C, the risk for developing microvascular complications (eye, kidney and nerve disease) decreases by up to 40%.
- **Blood pressure control.** Blood pressure control can reduce cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) by 33% to 50% and can reduce microvascular disease (eye, kidney and nerve disease) by approximately 33%.
- **Control of blood lipids.** Improved control of cholesterol and lipids (e.g. HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) can reduce cardiovascular complications by 20 to 50%.
- **Preventive practices for eyes, kidneys and feet.** Detection and treatment of diabetic eye disease with laser therapy can reduce the development of severe vision loss by an estimated 50% to 60%. Comprehensive foot care programs can reduce amputation rates by 45% to 85%.

*Information compiled from:
American Diabetes Association and
Blackheathcare.com*

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Healthy Connections is a monthly newsletter that reaches over 1500 readers to address issues of health and economic development in the African community.

If you want to advance the struggle for the quality of health and economic development or have an interest in writing an article relating to either health or economic development please submit your article by email to:

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