
Diabetes Life Lines



A newsletter from your county Extension office
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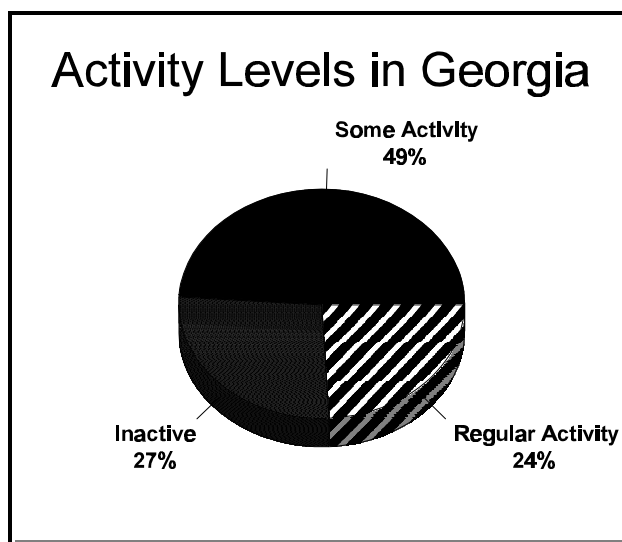
How Physically Active Are Georgians?

Despite the fact that all the major health organizations claim that regular physical activity improves health and quality of life, Georgians still fall short of the recommendations. In fact, only one in four adults in Georgia is active on a regular basis according to the Georgia Department of Human Resources in the *Physical Activity Report, Georgia 2001*.

The benefits of regular physical activity are known to include not only improvement in blood glucose levels for people with diabetes, but also reduction of the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and

osteoporosis. Regular activity also helps people maintain healthy body weight and enhances quality of life.

According to the report, about 1/4 of adults in Georgia are regularly active, 1/4 are inactive, and the remainder are active sometimes, but not regularly. Results were similar for men and women and for persons of different races. Since the survey began fifteen year ago, more Georgians have become inactive and fewer are active on a regular basis.



Walking is the most commonly reported activity in Georgia.

The report contains three important messages:

- 1) Regularity of physical activity is more important than the intensity. Regular activity is defined as at least 30



minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least five, and preferably all days of the week.

2) Activity does not need to be a structured exercise program. It can be part of routine daily activities. The 30 minutes can also be broken up into three 10-minute sessions. For example, it might take 10 minutes to walk from the far part of the parking lot to your office. Or you may get in 10 minutes of walking by getting off at an earlier bus stop.

3) Any increase in activity helps. Inactive people improve their health by becoming more physically active even if they don't reach the recommended levels.

Georgia is working on making it easier for people to be active by changing the environment and changing policy that affects the environment and peoples' behavior. A number of programs and projects in schools, worksites, and health care have been created aimed at increasing physical activity in Georgia. Some projects are working on providing safe areas to walk, bicycle, hike, and play. Others provide fitness or wellness programs.

When you consider the risks, isn't it worth the effort to increase your physical activity?

Be Smart About Your Heart Campaign

A new campaign has been developed to make people with diabetes aware of their high risk for heart disease and stroke. The *Be Smart About Your Heart. Control the ABCs of Diabetes: A1c, Blood pressure, and Cholesterol* campaign was recently launched by the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) to increase awareness and to inform people how they can take steps to lower their risk.



The campaign focuses on the management of blood glucose, blood pressure, and blood lipids, particularly LDL cholesterol. In the message *Control the ABCs of Diabetes*, A is for the A1c test that measures average blood glucose, B is for blood pressure, and C is for cholesterol.

While death rates from heart disease have decreased in general, they are increasing for people with diabetes. People with diabetes need to ask their health care providers these questions. “What are my A1c, blood pressure and cholesterol numbers? What are my treatment goals? What do I need to do to reach my goals?”

Management of blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol can dramatically lower the risk for heart attack and stroke. “We have come to learn that the devastating effects of (heart) disease do not have to happen to people with diabetes , said Dr. Frank Vinicor, Director of the Division of Diabetes Translation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Managing the ABCs can make a real difference in the lives of people with diabetes.”

Look for information on prevention of heart disease from the *Be Smart About Your Heart* campaign in your area and reach for your goals for A1c, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Autonomic Neuropathy

If you think those high blood glucose levels do not have long-term effects, think again. Diabetic autonomic neuropathy (DAN) is a condition that affects the nerves that control your heart, lungs, stomach, intestines, bladder, and sex organs. These nerves are responsible for keeping your heart rate and blood pressure steady, for letting you know when you need to urinate, for movement of food through your stomach and intestines, and for sexual function.

Therefore, DAN spells major trouble for people affected by this condition.

Damage to the autonomic nerves can decrease the ability to feel the symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood glucose). DAN can also lead to heart attacks, irregular heartbeat, foot and leg ulcers, and kidney disease. However, finding DAN early can prevent such conditions and allow for better treatment.

Symptoms of Autonomic Neuropathy (DAN)

Dizziness or weakness upon standing
Nausea or vomiting
Stomach bloating
Constipation, diarrhea or both
Incontinence or difficulty urinating
Erectile dysfunction

DAN is often “invisible” in the early stages. That is, the disease has few or no symptoms. The symptoms found with DAN, such as dizziness and nausea, are common symptoms of many diseases or conditions. Therefore, DAN cannot be diagnosed based on symptoms alone.

Heart-rate variability (HVR) testing can determine if you have DAN. This test is quick and covered by most insurance plans. The test measures your heart’s response to simple exercises such



as standing up from a lying-down position, breathing deeply for one minute, and blowing with force for 15 seconds. If you have type 1 diabetes, you should first be tested 5 years after diagnosis and yearly thereafter. Everyone with type 2 diabetes should be tested right after diagnosis and every year after.

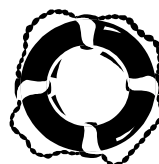
If you do not have DAN or only early signs of it, exercise may maintain or restore heart-rate variability. However, consult your doctor before starting an exercise program. To be safe, you may need an exercise stress test.

High blood glucose is the main cause of DAN, so good blood glucose control can prevent it. You may need to add diabetes medications, switch to additional daily insulin injections, or use an insulin pump to improve your diabetes control.

Finding and monitoring heart disease and other conditions affected by DAN is critical. DAN requires prompt and aggressive treatment of high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol in addition to improving diabetes control.

An antioxidant known as alpha-lipoic acid or thioctic acid shows promise as a treatment for DAN. However, you should only use alpha-lipoic acid with your doctor's guidance since the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate this supplement.

Don't put it off any longer. Talk to your doctor today about heart-rate variability testing to see if you have autonomic neuropathy. As always, work on improving your blood glucose control to help prevent neuropathy and other complications of diabetes.



People With Diabetes Are High Priority for Flu Shots

Public health officials are urging people with diabetes to get vaccinated against influenza (flu) as soon as the vaccine is available at their doctor's office or county health department. Although a delay in vaccine production this year means that most Georgians will be asked to wait till December to get their flu shots, people with chronic disease like diabetes and people over age 64 are first in line and can begin getting their flu shots in November.

The flu can be more than aches and pains - it can cost you your life. People with diabetes are three times more likely to die from complications of flu and pneumonia than are people who don't have diabetes. Vaccines can substantially reduce the risk, yet only half of people with diabetes get an annual flu shot.

Talk to your doctor today about getting a flu shot. It could be a life saver.

Recipe Corner

Cranberry-Apple Crisp

Filling:

3 cups thinly sliced peeled apples
(mixture of Granny Smith and Rome)
2 cups fresh cranberries
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. grated orange rind
Non-stick cooking spray

Topping:

1/3 cup flour
1 cup oats, regular
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup stick margarine

Preheat oven to 350°F.

1. Combine apples, cranberries, sugar, cinnamon, and orange rind. Pour into 8x8-inch baking dish, coated with cooking spray. 2. Mix together flour, oats, cinnamon, brown sugar, and margarine with a fork until crumbly. Sprinkle over apple mixture.

3. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes.

Makes 10 servings

Serving size: 1/2 cup

Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 fruit, 1 fat

Nutrients per serving: Calories 174

Fat 5 grams

Carbohydrate 30 grams

Cholesterol 0 milligrams

Sodium 45 milligrams

Fiber 3 grams

Suggested Menu

<u>Menu Item</u>	<u>Exchanges</u>	<u>Carbohydrate</u>
3 ounces roasted turkey	3 lean meat	†
1/2 cup mashed potatoes	1 starch	15 grams
1/2 cup green beans	1 vegetable	5 grams
Tossed lettuce salad	free	†
1 Tbs. fat-free vinaigrette	free	†
1/2 cup <i>Cranberry Apple Crisp</i> *	1 starch , 1 fruit, 1 fat	30 grams

* *This month's featured recipe* † Insignificant

Note: Portions may need to be adjusted for your meal plan.

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Dear Friend,

Diabetes Life Lines is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by Food and Nutrition Specialists at the University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes, nutrition, the diabetic exchange system, recipes, and important events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

Janine Freeman, Principal Writer
Janet Rodekoher, Editor

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