

Living with Diabetes

MILFORD REGIONAL DIABETES EDUCATION PATIENT NEWSLETTER



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Eating Sensibly, Exercising Regularly is Key to Success with Type 2 Diabetes

Rachel Kagno

At 77 years old, longtime Milford and Franklin resident Stephen Lincoln still enjoys an occasional Martini. But as someone who has lived and sometimes



Stephen Lincoln

struggled with type 2 diabetes for the past 20 years, he also understands the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

"I have no choice, either I change the way I live or face the grim consequences. It's common sense," said

Lincoln, as he proudly shared his "6.7" A1C results from earlier that day. A retired dairy industry sales executive, Lincoln remembers the toll his job took on his health over the years. "I traveled extensively throughout the Northeast, which meant staying in hotels, wining and dining with clients and co-workers...it was a difficult lifestyle but I had to use discipline to eat sensibly. And I always looked for the gym when I checked into a hotel."

For the first 12 years of Lincoln's diagnosis, he was able to manage his diabetes through oral medication, but after he retired about eight years ago, he was forced to try a new approach to tame his disease. His doctor recommended a change in medication to insulin.

"This was a new school of thought for me. Apparently, pills can be less ef-

fective over time with people who have type 2 diabetes, and insulin might even stimulate the pancreas to produce more natural insulin. I believe it worked."

At that time, Lincoln's primary care provider Dr. Eric Kohler, of Franklin Primary Care, recommended the Diabetes Education program to keep him on track, and that's when Norma Ringuette, RN, CDCES, entered the picture.

"Norma has been invaluable," said Lincoln. "She taught me how to adjust my own insulin, which has been super helpful. She is always motivating me to do better. Teaching me to keep a log to track my blood sugar has helped me establish good habits and stay accountable."

According to Ringuette, "diabetes education is not only about teaching patients how to manage medications, testing and lifestyle changes but also about supporting them along their journey so they can better manage their diabetes at home."

With five kids and seven grandchildren, Stephen is doing well and looks forward to playing more golf and traveling to California to visit with family.

His advice to other people living with diabetes? "Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and patient support is crucial to your success in managing type 2 diabetes. Keep records, stay accountable, and embrace your new normal."

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Milford Regional Diabetes Education, please call 508-381-3092.



Walk the Walk

Amber Redden, RN

Warmer weather and longer days offer the perfect opportunity to become more physically active. Regular physical activity is an important part of a well-rounded diabetes treatment plan. Walking is a simple yet effective way you can increase your daily activity level.

Walking doesn't have to be vigorous to be impactful and can be beneficial for people of all ages and fitness levels. It can also strengthen your heart, boost your mood, and help you maintain a healthy weight.

Exercise also offers additional benefits for people living with diabetes. When you are active your cells become more sensitive to insulin and can be beneficial for glucose control.

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Walk the Walk Continued from side one.

The American Diabetes Association recommends people with diabetes should aim for at least 150 minutes or more of aerobic exercise each week. A study by *Diabetes Care* 2013;36(10) shows, a "15-minute walk after eating may help lower blood sugar levels more than exercising at other times of the day."

If you are currently not in an exercise routine, remember to set small realistic goals to start. Setting small attainable goals will help lead to successes that you can build upon.

Tips for preparing for your walk:

- Check your feet daily
- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes
- Stay hydrated
- Carry a snack or source of sugar
- Check your blood sugar level more often when you are being active
- Walking with a friend can be motivating and fun!
- Check with your town for local walking trails and paths
- Always check with your health care provider before beginning any new exercise program.



Diabetes Foot Care

Damien Lucius, DPM

Diabetic foot care is essential, as diabetes can be dangerous to your feet – even a small cut can produce serious consequences. Diabetes may cause nerve damage that takes away the feeling in your feet, and may also reduce blood flow to the feet, making it harder to heal an injury or resist infection. Because of these problems, you may not notice a foreign object in your shoe. As a result, you could develop a blister or a sore. This could lead to an infection or a non-healing wound that could put you at risk for an amputation.



Follow these guidelines to avoid serious foot problems:

Inspect your feet daily. Check for cuts, blisters, redness, swelling or nail problems. Use a magnifying hand mirror to look at the bottom of your feet. Call your doctor if you notice anything.

Bathe your feet in lukewarm water (never hot). Keep your feet clean by washing them daily. Use only lukewarm water – the temperature you would use on a newborn baby.

Be gentle when bathing your feet. Wash them using a soft washcloth or sponge. Dry by blotting or patting and carefully dry between the toes.

Moisturize your feet but not between your toes. Use a moisturizer daily to keep dry skin from itching or cracking. But don't moisturize between the toes as that could encourage a fungal infection.

Cut your nails carefully. Cut them straight across and file the edges. Don't cut nails too short, as this could lead to ingrown toenails. If you have concerns about your nails, consult your doctor.

Never treat corns or calluses yourself. No "bathroom surgery" or medicated pads. Visit your doctor for appropriate treatment.

Wear clean, dry socks. Change them daily.

Consider socks made specifically for patients living with diabetes. These socks have extra cushioning, do not have elastic tops, are higher than the ankle and are made from fibers that wick moisture away from the skin.

Wear socks to bed. If your feet get cold at night, wear socks. Never use a heating pad or a hot water bottle.

Shake out your shoes and feel the inside before wearing. Remember, your feet may not be able to feel a pebble or other foreign object, so always inspect your shoes before putting them on.

Keep your feet warm and dry. Don't let your feet get wet in snow or rain. Wear warm socks and shoes in winter.

Consider using an antiperspirant on the soles of your feet. This is helpful if you have excessive sweating of the feet.

Never walk barefoot. Not even at home! Always wear shoes or slippers. You could step on something and get a scratch or cut.

Take care of your diabetes. Keep your blood sugar levels under control.

Do not smoke. Smoking restricts blood flow in your feet.

Get periodic foot exams. Seeing your foot and ankle surgeon on a regular basis can help prevent the foot complications of diabetes.

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