



Reeves County
Hospital District

Press Release
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Understanding Your Diabetes Risk is Key to Protecting Your Health

Millions are unaware that they are living with diabetes or at high risk of developing it.

PECOS, Texas (April 2, 2021) – More than 1 in 10 Americans are affected by diabetes, but as many as 7 million are unaware that they are living with the condition. Another 88 million Americans are at risk of developing the disease, which is why knowing whether you are at risk is so important.

Since diabetes is a major risk factor for severe illness for COVID-19, it is important to sound the alarm about diabetes and find out whether you are at risk so you can take steps to protect your health.

“Diabetes is a serious illness that is underdiagnosed,” said Dr. Steven Serrano, Family Practice with OB physician, at the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, a service of Reeves County Hospital District. “Especially now when those with diabetes are at elevated risk of serious illness from COVID-19, knowing where you stand is key to ensuring your health and safety.”

The American Diabetes Association helps bring an awareness to educate the public about the serious nature of diabetes, especially Type 2, which is largely preventable and has been shown to raise the risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

At this time, those with Type 2 diabetes may be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which is available in the local community through Reeves County Hospital District.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, diabetes affects more than 34 million people across the nation. It remains one of the leading causes of death and can raise the risk of other serious health conditions, including heart disease, nerve damage and kidney disease.

Many of those living with diabetes are unaware of their condition, which is why knowing the signs and meeting with a healthcare provider are important steps for those at risk.

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Warning signs of diabetes include excessive thirst, frequent urination, drowsiness and itching, blurred vision, excessive weight, tingling in the extremities, fatigue and skin infections. Other signs include slow healing of cuts and scratches, especially on the feet. The disease can also cause other complications, such as blindness, and destruction of tissues through infections such as gangrene. Management of the disease is key to reducing the risk of complications.

According to the American Diabetes Association, there are three common types of diabetes: Type 1, Type 2, and gestational. Type 2 diabetes is the center of attention during Alert Day, because it is the most widespread and can be fatal when not managed properly.

People at the highest risk of Type 2 diabetes are overweight, have diabetic relatives, and are over age 35. Statistics also show that women are at a higher risk for diabetes than men, as are those with a family history of the disease.

Lowering your risk almost always begins with making certain lifestyle changes. A balanced diet and physical exercise can manage your risk. Choosing whole grains and avoiding refined sugar and other processed foods is an important way to improve your overall health. At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week is also recommended.

One important way to determine whether you are living with diabetes or are at risk is having your blood sugar checked at least once a year. Your blood sugar can be determined through a simple blood test ordered by your provider at the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic during your yearly wellness exam. This screening can help your provider determine what stage of the disease you have and explain how you can maintain optimum health while living with diabetes.

“Don’t delay the preventive screenings that are important for protecting your health,” Dr. Serrano said. “Now is a good time to schedule your wellness exam and find out whether you may be at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

To schedule your yearly wellness exam, call the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic at 432-447-056. To learn more about healthcare services available in Reeves County or to find a provider, visit www.reevescountyhospital.com.