



Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Programs

DIABETES Views

NEWS
NUTRITION
EXERCISE
DIET
LIFESTYLE

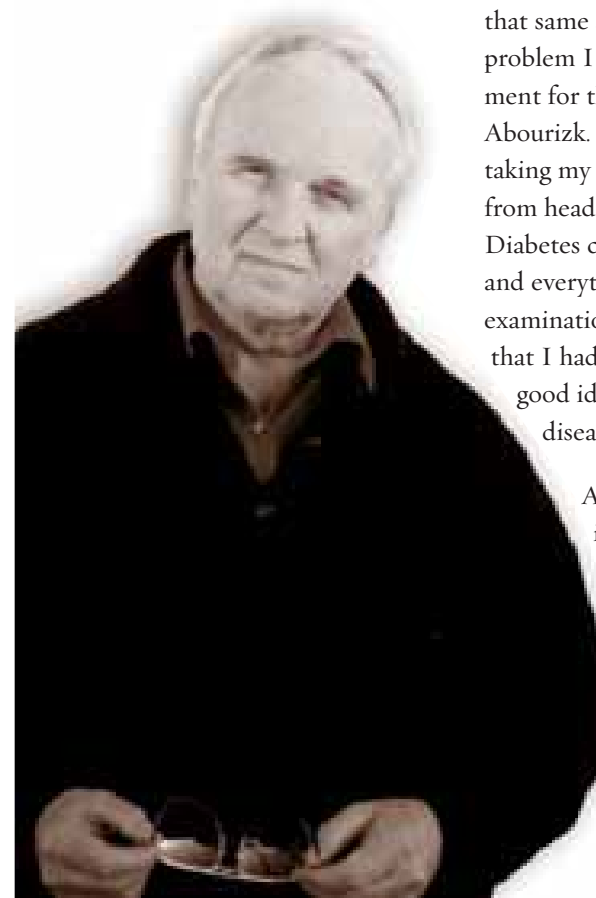
How I Got My Diabetes Under Control

By Tom McCann

Tom McCann is the author of the critically acclaimed best-selling nonfiction book, *An American Company: The Tragedy of United Fruit (Crown, 1976)*, and the novel, *Earth Angel*, published in 2002. He lives in Boston and is a patient at the MGH Diabetes Center.

“...I also credit my participation in the diabetes education program with helping me get my diabetes in control in a short amount of time.”

—Tom McCann



Last December I was diagnosed with a serious case of Type 2 Diabetes. I could have been handed that same diagnosis at least two years earlier but looking back I realize that I was in denial. I suppose I was hoping that the unmistakable symptoms would go away. Of course they didn't. If anything, they got worse and reached a point where I had to find out why I was thirsty all the time . . . hungry again just a couple of hours after eating. . . losing weight. . . and always fatigued. One day last December I was in slow moving, stop and go traffic on Route 128 and actually fell asleep at the wheel and rear ended the car in front of me. Fortunately there was no damage to either the cars or the drivers but that falling asleep incident was my wake up call.

We are a Mass General family so it was natural to call the MGH Diabetes Center. I called that same afternoon. When I explained my problem I was given an immediate appointment for the next morning with Dr. Nicolas Abourizk. He spent a very long time with me, taking my medical history and examining me from head to toe because that's where Diabetes can affect you - from head to toe and everything in between, literally. With that examination Dr. Abourizk and I both learned that I had Type 2 Diabetes and got a pretty good idea of the extent of the damage the disease had done to my body.

After the examination Dr. Abourizk introduced me to Denise Richards, a nurse practitioner at the Center. Denise specializes in Diabetes and picked up where Dr. Abourizk left off, telling me all about my newly diagnosed dis-

ease. I quickly learned from Denise that Diabetes is the most *patient involving* disease of all. It is a disease that the patient must manage on a daily basis; one for which the results are directly related to the effort put into learning about it. Diabetes patients have to learn as much as possible about Diabetes and how best to manage it through diet, exercise, testing, and the various medication options available. I received my first insulin injection from Denise that day. I also learned how to inject myself, how to test my glucose levels and how often to test.

Denise and I spent a lot of time on the phone together during those early days. She monitored my blood glucose levels a couple of times a week and adjusted my insulin and Metformin as needed. Several weeks into the process she mentioned that the Center was starting a program for Diabetes patients. Denise told me she thought it would be useful if I signed up and said, "Tell your wife that she is welcome to come with you because Diabetes is a family affair and the more other members of the family learn about this disease the better."

My wife Joan eagerly accepted the invitation. She was an active participant, attending all six sessions and learning a lot about Diabetes. She has helped keep me in compliance.

The group had about twelve of us who had the disease. It was a diverse group in terms of age, gender, type of diabetes, treatments and the various stages we were in. Nurse Practitioner Tiffany Soper led the first session; Denise Richards was also in the room.

Tiffany and Denise were able to answer all our questions - and we had a lot of them. Many

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Your Questions Answered by Melanie Pearsall, RD, CDE

Nutritionist at MGH Revere



I have heard that whole grains are good for me. Why and what are whole grains?

Foods that contain whole grains are very good for people with Diabetes. These foods tend to be higher in fiber, vitamins, minerals and fats that are good for you because they are made using the entire grain. Other foods that are not considered whole grains (such as white bread and pasta) are not made with the entire grain and are not as nutritious.

Whole grains may help with blood sugar control, weight loss, and heart health. Foods are considered to be whole grain if the first ingredient on the nutrition label includes the phrase “whole grain”. An example of this is “whole grain wheat”. The food should include at least 3 grams of fiber.



Why should I remove the skin from chicken or turkey?

It is important to keep animal fats in your diet low. Animal fats are saturated fats which increase blood cholesterol levels. High cholesterol levels can cause heart disease which is the *number one killer of people with diabetes*. Much of the fat in chicken and turkey is contained in the skin. Marinating meat before cooking can help to retain flavor and moisture so you’ll never miss the fat in the skin!

To submit questions to the nutritionist, call 617-726-0466 or email diabetesviews@partners.org

MIXED SUMMER HERBS ADD FLAVOR & FRESHNESS TO A HEALTHY CHICKEN DISH.

Herbed Roasted Chicken Breast

Created by Emily Gelsomin, RD, LDN

Cooked chicken breast doesn't have to be boring to be part of a healthy diet. Try this method of roasting chicken for added flavor. As the weather gets warmer, fresh herbs become cheaper and more widely available — check your local farmers market.

- 4-4 ounce boneless chicken breasts, skin on (or use four 6 ounce breasts with the bone in)
- 1 tablespoon of fresh rosemary (or 1 teaspoon of dried rosemary)
- 1 tablespoon of fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon of dried thyme)
- 1 tablespoon of fresh basil (or 1 teaspoon of dried basil)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoon lemon zest (grated lemon peel)
- 2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Pinch of black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Place chicken breasts on baking sheet, spreading chicken out so they are not touching each other. Pour oil on top of chicken and spread out.

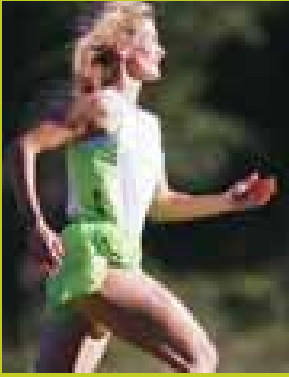
Mix rosemary, thyme, basil, garlic, lemon zest, salt and pepper in bowl. Separate part of the skin from each chicken breast, just enough to stuff about 1 tablespoon (1 tsp if using dried spices) of the spice mixture underneath each skin. Roast chicken for approx. 25 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees Fahrenheit (skin will turn golden brown). Cool 5-10 minutes. Remove skin and discard before serving.

Yield: 4 servings (1 breast/ person)

For a complete meal, serve with grilled vegetables or roasted potatoes and a salad.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 207
PROTEIN: 33 g
SODIUM: 229 mg
CARBOHYDRATE: 0.7 g
FIBER: 0.3 g
FAT: 7 g
Sat Fat: 1.7 g



You Can Make Exercise a Part of Your Life

Cliff Seeto, Manager, The Clubs at Charles River Park

Exercise is a very important part in managing your diabetes!

Regular exercise can help you:

- Reduce the health risks of diabetes;
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels to improve the health of your heart and lungs;
- Control your weight;
- Lower blood glucose levels;
- Increase your energy.

These tips can help you add a safe and effective exercise plan to your life.

Before starting

Talk with your doctor about your exercise plan. She/he will make sure it is right for your health needs.

Make sure you have

- Proper fitting and comfortable sneakers;
Wearing the right shoes helps to prevent foot and leg problems;
- Simple snacks with you whenever you exercise;
Keep an energy bar or a sweet drink like orange juice with you;
- A friend or partner to exercise with.

Your exercise plan

HOW LONG AND WHEN TO EXERCISE:

If you are just beginning to exercise you may only be able to do simple exercise like walking for 5 – 10 minutes. Everyone is different and some of us may need to begin with brief sessions and slowly increase time. If you are able to exercise at least three times a week, you should increase your time to 20-30 minutes. Set days and times for exercise to avoid distractions that can deter you from exercising.

What exercise to do

Your exercise plan should have a mix of cardiovascular, strength and flexibility exercises. Pick a cardiovascular exercise like walking, biking, or swimming. You can do strength exercises using resistance machines or weights. A stretching routine or Yoga can help with flexibility.

Ask at your local community center, YMCA, or health club if they have a certified personal trainer who can work with you.

Important things to be aware of during and after exercise

If you feel dizzy, are sweating a great amount, or have pale and cold, wet skin, you should STOP exercising and do this:

- Eat a snack such as an energy bar or drink such as orange juice.
- Measure your blood glucose. It should be 100 or higher. If it is lower than 80mg/dl you have hypoglycemia. Stop your exercise for the day. Monitor your blood glucose until it reaches 100mg/dl.

Exercise is not a chore. Exercise can make you feel better so that you can enjoy life to the fullest.

Tips & Ideas for your exercise plan:

Explore your neighborhood:

- Find the parks;
- Explore area by area, around your home;
- Find sports tracks at schools.

In bad weather, go indoors:

- Walk around a shopping mall;
- Use an indoor track or gym; in neighborhood schools, YMCA;
- Take an exercise class.

Time savers:

- No time?:
- Take three 10-minute walks a day;
- Sign up for scheduled classes;
- Have several timed walking routes:
- Short loop, 10 minutes;
- Medium loop, 20 minutes;
- Long loop, 30 minutes;
- Keep your gear packed:
- Be ready to exercise.

Track your progress:

- Keep a daily log of your exercise;
- Measure your walking distance:
- Use a pedometer to count your steps;
- Use a map to measure your distance;
- Keep track of time spent exercising:
- Wear a watch;
- Learn to take your pulse;
- Increase your distance & time gradually.

Join a group:

- You can find exercise buddies at: Your neighborhood parks, local gym classes or community center.
- Join or volunteer for organizations with outdoor activities.

Enjoy and stay healthy!

Traveling with Your Diabetes Medications Eileen Wyner, NP

Welcome to summer!

Over the summer, many of us go on vacation. Here are some important things to be aware of when packing your diabetes medications for travel



Before your trip:

- Make sure you have enough of your medication(s) for your vacation;
- If you have any questions about traveling with your medications ask your healthcare provider;
- Pack your medications, your glucometer, extra snacks, and glucose tablets in the event of low blood sugar.

If you take oral medications:

- Check the expiration date. Throw out any expired medication;
- Keep medications in a place where they won't become too hot or too cold.

If you use insulin:

- Tell your doctor where you are traveling. Your insulin may need to be adjusted;
- Pack insulin in an insulated bag with a gel pack, not a frozen insert;
- Store insulin at a temperature between 36 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit;
- If the color changes or you see anything floating in the insulin, do not use.

During your trip:

- Keep medications in their original containers; this will make passing through airport security easier;
- Do not pack medications. Carry them with you;
- Take your medications exactly as your healthcare provider has told you.

With careful planning you can have a safe and enjoyable vacation!

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often led to meaningful and stimulating discussion. Each of us told our "story" as it related to Diabetes. In the process we all came away from that first session with better knowledge of the factors affecting blood sugar, with particular emphasis on food and nutrition, exercise, medications, the causes of Diabetes, and what to watch out for. The kind of basic information we need in order to take better care of ourselves when we have Diabetes.

One of the unexpected outcomes, to me at least, was the way the group members "bonded", with one another and with Tiffany and Denise, by the end of the second session. We began talking much more openly and more specifically about our experiences with Diabetes. We were all eager to share stories, tips, knowledge and even problems related to the disease.

Joan came to every session and other spouses and significant others attended as many sessions as their work and other schedules permitted. We looked forward to seeing one another. Since the formal support sessions have ended we still get together, for an

hour or so once a month over a sandwich, for updates, Q & A sessions and just for the sake of keeping in touch.

My Diabetes is now under control thanks to the careful management by Dr. Abourizk and Denise Richards; but I also credit my attendance at these sessions with helping me bring it under control in such a relatively short time.

I wholeheartedly recommend attending a diabetes program to anyone who has Diabetes, whether recently diagnosed as I was or who like one member of our group has had the disease for fifteen years.

Speak to your physician or your nurse practitioner for information on a diabetes program at your practice. They can help you find dates, times and other details about the program. You'll be glad you did.

DIABETESViews

Volume 1 / No. 1



MASSACHUSETTS
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About MGH DiabetesVIEWS

Editor: Sandy O'Keefe,
MGH Diabetes Program Manager

Consultation and Translation:
Karin Hobrecker

Design: Andrade Design

To submit a question to the nutritionist or leave comments, please email or call:
diabetesviews@partners.org
or 617-726-0466

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