



diabetes
new zealand

Media Release

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Diabetes Diagnosis – 6% and Growing Fast

One in nine New Zealand Europeans, one in three Polynesian people and one in five Maori have type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes – that's over 6% of all New Zealanders.

According to the Diabetes Research Institute, diabetes is affecting more New Zealanders than ever before with no sign of a slowdown. In fact the numbers are expected to double in the next 20 years.

Diabetes is a chronic condition that can affect anyone. Its serious complications include heart and kidney failure, eye and gum disease, loss of limbs, impotence and depression. In type 2 diabetes (unlike type 1) people still make insulin but production is sluggish or their body is resistant to it. Becoming overweight is almost always the trigger, even in young people.

It is New Zealand's biggest health issue, yet the facts are still not well known, Diabetes New Zealand National President Chris Baty says. "Nineteen people are diagnosed with diabetes every day and for each of these people there is another who has the condition but doesn't know it."

Diabetes Awareness Week, 17-23 November 2009, focuses on how the complications of diabetes steal people's health and even their lives. The theme for this year is *'The Quiet Thief'*, raising awareness of the complications and how to combat them through early diagnosis and good management.

"Almost 200,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes each year, Chris Baty says. "Diabetes causes half of all heart attacks, kidney failures, blindness and amputations.

"That's why we're focusing this year on the complications. We want to hammer home the insidious nature of diabetes and its complications, which cause much pain and suffering both to people with diabetes and their families.

"Awareness can mean the difference between life and death, between healthy or poor lifestyles. People with diabetes and their families need support to tackle diabetes and its complications in our communities."

This year's Diabetes Awareness Week focus on awareness of complications links to the International Diabetes Federation theme for 2009-2013 of *Education and Prevention*.

Diabetes New Zealand, the voice of all people with diabetes in New Zealand, advocates for improved health outcomes for those affected by diabetes. "We are calling for action to improve health care for all people with diabetes, with a particular focus on making healthy lifestyle choices, improved oral health, regular eyesight and other health checks," Chris Baty says.

"People can make lifestyle changes to help prevent diabetes complications, particularly by eating healthy food and doing regular physical activity. By taking the right steps to stay healthy you can help reduce the risk of diabetes complications."

For more details about diabetes and Diabetes Awareness Week see www.diabetes.org.nz

Diabetes Awareness Week is supported by the Ministry of Health

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New Zealand Diabetes Facts:

- 280,000 New Zealanders have either diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes
- About 500,000 new Zealanders are estimated to have pre-diabetes
- 195,000 New Zealanders have diagnosed diabetes; of those:
 - 180,000 have type 2 diabetes
 - 15,000 have type 1 diabetes
- Diabetes affects more than 340,000 families
- 19 people are diagnosed each day
- 800,000 overweight or obese people are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes

Diabetes causes:

- 50% of heart attacks
- 33% of strokes
- 50% of kidney failures
- 50% of blindness
- 50% of amputations.

Source: Diabetes New Zealand Annual report 2008