

Public urged to keep healthy lifestyle to prevent diabetes

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 14) urged members of the public to keep a healthy lifestyle to prevent diabetes mellitus (or simply, diabetes) in support of World Diabetes Day, which is held annually on November 14.

Diabetes is a common chronic condition marked by high levels of glucose in the blood. Improper diabetic control may lead to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys and nerves. About one in 10 adults globally have diabetes, and close to half are unaware that they are living with the condition. Among the main types of diabetes (type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes), type 2 diabetes is the most common form which makes up about 95 per cent of all diabetes cases. Key factors that contribute to developing type 2 diabetes include being overweight and obese, not getting enough exercise, and genetics.

"The Population Health Survey 2020-22 conducted by the DH revealed that the local prevalence of diabetes substantially increased from 5.3 per cent among persons aged 45 to 54 to 14.9 per cent among persons aged 55 to 64 and 19.0 per cent among persons aged 65 to 84. In 2023, there were 570* registered deaths attributed to diabetes, with a crude death rate of 7.6* per 100 000 population," a spokesman for the DH said.

Regardless of genetic risk, lifestyle changes are the best way to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. Members of the public are urged to reach and keep a healthy body weight; stay physically active with at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or equivalent amount and intensity of physical activity throughout the week; eat a healthy diet and limit sugar and saturated fat intake; and avoid drinking alcohol or smoking.

The spokesman said that walking as a way of conducting physical activity can guard against various chronic diseases and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. With an aim to encourage members of the public to increase their physical activities, the DH launched the 10,000 Steps a Day Campaign in 2022 to encourage adults to gradually increase their daily step goal to 10 000 based on their own physical conditions, abilities, pace and individual circumstances. The campaign has entered its third phase this year, and this year's event coincides with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Health Bureau and the DH for the first time partnered with the Greater Bay Area Mainland cities to jointly promote walking to mark the celebration. The Walking Challenge in Hong Kong commenced on November 1.

The risk of type 2 diabetes rises with age, and early detection of diabetes and intervention is crucial for reducing the risk of developing related complications. The Government launched the three-year Chronic Disease

Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) in November 2023 to provide subsidies to Hong Kong residents aged 45 or above with no known medical history of diabetes or hypertension to undergo diabetes and hypertension screening and receive long-term follow-up by a paired Family Doctor of their choice.

The Scheme has been well received since its rollout. As at October 22, 2024, around 73 000* members of the public have participated in the Scheme. Among the participants who have completed the screening, nearly 40 per cent* have been diagnosed with prediabetes (Note), diabetes or hypertension. They can then receive long-term follow-up care in the community including medical consultations, medications, services by nursing clinics, allied health and laboratory investigations provided by their family doctor, District Health Centre (DHC)/ DHC Express and other healthcare providers according to clinical conditions. The Government will expand the service scope of the Scheme to cover blood lipid tests to enable more comprehensive assessment and proper management of the risk factors (including high blood pressure, high blood glucose and high blood lipids) of cardiovascular diseases in 2025. For more details, members of the public may browse the thematic website of the CDCC Pilot Scheme (www.primaryhealthcare.gov.hk/cdcc/en).

To contain the prevalence of diabetes, the Government will continue organising health promotional campaigns to enhance public awareness about the importance of healthy living, enabling persons at risk to have regular measurements of blood glucose. The Government will also work in close partnership with community partners to foster a health-enhancing environment.

To know more about the Government's initiatives and actions to prevent and control non-communicable diseases including diabetes, please visit the Change for Health website of the DH (www.change4health.gov.hk).

*Provisional figures

Note: A blood glucose level ranging from 6.0 to 6.4 per cent for glycated haemoglobin or a fasting glucose level of 6.1 to 6.9 mmol/L.