

Public urged to maintain vigilance against diabetes

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 14) urged members of the public to maintain vigilance in preventing diabetes and stressed that a healthy lifestyle can effectively reduce the risk of developing diabetes.

Diabetes is a common chronic condition marked by high levels of glucose in the blood. 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 90 per cent of all diabetes cases.

In support of the World Diabetes Day which is designated on November 14 every year, a spokesman for the DH urged members of the public to lead a healthy lifestyle as type 2 diabetes is largely preventable by taking several simple steps, such as being physically active, eating a balanced diet, keeping a healthy body weight, avoiding smoking and refraining from alcohol consumption.

Apart from overweight and obesity, risk factors for type 2 diabetes include advancing age, a family history of diabetes, history of gestational diabetes or giving birth to a big baby, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets.

Diabetes is a major cause of morbidity, disability and mortality. In Hong Kong, diabetes was the 10th commonest cause of mortality with 548 registered deaths in 2021.

The spokesman said that people with diabetes are often asymptomatic in early stages. As the disease develops, diabetes may present with symptoms that include thirst, excessive urination, increased appetite, weight loss, fatigue, poor wound healing and infections. Delayed diagnosis or treatment can lead to complications, including blindness, heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure and diabetic foot disease.

According to the [Hong Kong Reference Framework for Diabetes Care for Adults in Primary Care Settings](#), it is recommended that persons aged 45 or above should screen for diabetes to avoid delayed diagnosis and treatment. If results are normal, screening should be conducted again every three years. Persons who have risk factors for diabetes such as being overweight or obese, or a family history of diabetes, should have more frequent screenings. Members of the public are encouraged to consult their doctors if they have any questions about diabetes or the relevant screening methods.

The spokesman said that walking as a way of conducting physical activity can guard against various chronic diseases and reduce the risk of diabetes. The DH has launched the ["10,000 Steps a Day"](#) campaign to encourage adults to gradually increase their daily step goal to 10 000 based on an individual's

own physical condition, ability, pace and circumstances. Any amount of walking is better than none, even if the goal cannot be reached yet.

The DH will continue to step up efforts in enhancing public awareness about the importance of healthy living including walking, in diabetes prevention and working in close partnership with other government departments as well as community partners to build a health-enhancing environment.

Members of the public can read the latest Non-Communicable Diseases Watch (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ncd_watch_nov_2022.pdf) issued by the DH for more information on diabetes as well as the DH's designated page for the World Diabetes Day (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/103647.html). For more information about the Government's initiatives and actions to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, please visit the thematic website at www.change4health.gov.hk/en/saptowards2025.