

World Diabetes Day heightens public vigilance against diabetes

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 14) urged members of the public to maintain a healthy lifestyle to prevent diabetes mellitus (diabetes). The appeal is made in support of [World Diabetes Day](#) held on November 14 every year. This year's campaign focuses on the importance of knowing the risk of type 2 diabetes as well as having access to the right information and care to ensure timely treatment and management.

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 (making up about 90 per cent of all diabetes cases). Improper diabetic control may result in serious complications, including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and blindness.

Diabetes is one of the priority non-communicable diseases that the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified as requiring urgent global actions. Globally, one in 10 adults have diabetes and close to half are not yet diagnosed.

"In Hong Kong, the Population Health Survey 2020-22 (the Survey) conducted by the DH observed that 8.5 per cent of non-institutionalised persons aged 15 to 84 had diabetes or raised blood glucose, including 5.4 per cent self-reported doctor-diagnosed diabetes and 3.1 per cent with no self-reported history, but raised blood glucose or glycated haemoglobin was found by biochemical testing of the Survey. In 2022, there were 661 registered deaths attributed to diabetes with a crude death rate of 9.0 per 100 000 population," a spokesman for the DH said.

Type 2 diabetes is strongly associated with obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, a family history of diabetes and increasing age. However, the risk factors for type 2 diabetes are prevalent among the local population. Among persons aged 15 to 84, the Survey observed that 54.6 per cent of them were overweight or obese by body mass index. While 14.4 percent of persons aged 15 or above reported that they have smoked, 8.7 per cent drank at least once a week. Regarding physical activity participation, 24.8 percent of persons aged 18 or above performed an insufficient level of physical activities. Regardless of genetic risk, healthy living can prevent type 2 diabetes or delay its onset. Members of the public are encouraged to keep a healthy body weight, be physically active, eat a balanced diet, avoid smoking and refrain from alcohol drinking.

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. To promote the health benefits of walking, the DH has launched the "[10,000 Steps a Day](#)" campaign since 2022 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. With the slogan of "Walk Together for Health and Happiness", this year's campaign encourages family members or friends to support each other and walk together, integrating walking 10 000 steps a day into their daily life.

Another key to lower the risk of complications from type 2 diabetes is screening for high blood glucose with early detection and intervention if indicated. While screening for type 2 diabetes should begin at the age of 45, screenings should be conducted every one to three years based on the presence of diabetes risk factors and previous results. Members of the public are encouraged to consult their family doctors if they have any questions about diabetes or relevant screening recommendations. Hong Kong residents aged 45 or above with no known medical history of diabetes could also register for the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme). The list of family doctors participating in the Scheme, details and frequently asked questions of the Scheme are also available on the CDCC Pilot Scheme dedicated website (www.primaryhealthcare.gov.hk/cdcc/en) for public reference. Members of the public may as well call the hotline at 2157 0500 for inquiries. Dedicated staff of the hotline will answer calls from 9am to 9pm from Mondays to Saturdays.

To halt the rise of diabetes, the DH will continue organising health promotional campaigns to increase people's health literacy and enhance public awareness about the importance of healthy living, as well as working in close partnership with other government departments and community partners to foster 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_2023_eng.pdf) issued by the DH for more information about diabetes. 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).