Facing Diabetes
What do Halle Berry, Nick Jonas, Larry King, Jerry Lewis, Walt Frazier and Elizabeth Taylor have in common? The answer might surprise you: diabetes. You probably don’t think of these people as faces of diabetes. It can affect anyone from an Oscar-winning actress to a record-breaking athlete to someone in your family.

News reports lately suggest that due to the lifestyle we have in our country, diabetes is widespread. Diabetes affects an estimated 23.6 million people in the U.S. 90 percent to 95 percent have type 2 diabetes. Almost 18 million people have been diagnosed, but 5.7 million are unaware they have the disease.

About Diabetes and Prediabetes
Diabetes is a chronic disease that involves the regulation of blood sugar and occurs in two different forms, type 1 and type 2. Both forms of diabetes result from the body’s inability to either produce or respond adequately to insulin. (A third type, gestational diabetes, occurs only during pregnancy and frequently leads to type 2 diabetes.)

Insulin, which is produced by the pancreas, is the hormone that controls the movement of glucose from the blood into cells. Glucose -- also called blood sugar -- constantly moves through the bloodstream in order to supply the body with the energy needed for muscle contractions and metabolism.

Type 2 diabetes is commonly preceded by Prediabetes. In Prediabetes, blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be defined as diabetes. However, many people with Prediabetes develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Prediabetes also increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. With modest weight loss and moderate physical activity, people with Prediabetes can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes.
What causes diabetes?
The cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown, but it is believed that genetic and environmental factors (possibly viruses) may be involved. The body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin producing cells in the pancreas. Insulin allows glucose to enter the cells of the body to provide energy.

When glucose cannot enter the cells, it builds up in the blood, depriving the cells of nutrition. People with type 1 diabetes must take daily insulin injections and regularly monitor their blood sugar levels.

The exact cause of type 2 diabetes is unknown. However, there does appear to be a genetic factor which causes it to run in families. And, although a person can inherit a tendency to develop type 2 diabetes, it usually takes another factor, such as obesity, to bring on the disease.

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle
A healthy lifestyle will help you attain and maintain a healthy weight, manage your blood glucose level, lower blood pressure if you have high blood pressure, reduce stress and improve your mood.

People who have type 2 diabetes can sometimes control their condition with diet and exercise, and avoid medication or reduce the dose they take. Even if you need medication to help control your diabetes, following a healthy meal plan and getting regular physical activity can help with control.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), people with type 2 diabetes need to be aware of their total daily caloric intake. They also need to make sure they get appropriate amounts of carbohydrates, protein and fats, and adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals each day.
For more information about Diabetes, go to the American Diabetes Association’s website. These “Lower Your Risk” topics are under the Basics tab.

**Small Steps for Your Health**
Making just a few small changes can have a big impact on your weight and health. Learn how to make these changes step-by-step.

**Healthy Eating**
Eating healthy is one of the most important things you can do to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

**Overweight**
Staying at a healthy weight can help you prevent and manage problems like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, and high blood glucose.

**All About Cholesterol**
Cholesterol is a form of fat that is carried in the blood. Unhealthy cholesterol levels can raise your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

**Physical Activity**
Staying active helps manage your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol and lowers your risk for pre-diabetes, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

**High Blood Pressure**
High blood pressure raises your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other problems. Managing blood pressure can help prevent these problems.

**High Blood Glucose**
Managing your blood glucose (sugar) can help you prevent and manage type 2 diabetes.

**Smoking**
Smoking causes a lot of problems in your body and can raise your risk of heart attack or stroke.

**Gestational Diabetes**
If you’ve had gestational diabetes (GDM), you’re at higher risk of having it again in future pregnancies and of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

**Age, Race, Gender & Family History**
There are some things that affect your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke that you can't change. But being aware of them can help you take smart steps to lower your risk.
Cooking & Menu Planning Classes

Your doctor or health care provider can advise you on diagnosis of diabetes and how you should care for yourself, including medications, diet and exercise. But, how would you like some help learning more about cooking and meal planning?

We are planning a special Diabetes cooking school called *Living Well with Diabetes*. We will cover such topics as “Meal Planning”, “Selecting Healthy Food”, “Taking Care of the Diabetic Body” and others. Each of the five sessions will be a stand-alone program, so you may attend one or more sessions, or all five. *Living Well with Diabetes* will be presented on Tuesdays from April 9 through May 7, from 9:00 am until noon. We will have a powerpoint lesson, and then a demonstration meal. When we are finished, everyone will be invited to enjoy the meal. The meals will include a main dish, side dishes, and dessert.

**Healthy eating tips from the American Diabetes Association:**

- Eat a wide variety of foods each day. Try new foods and eat a variety of foods within each section of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate food plan. Visit the USDA website for more information.
- Eat foods that are high in fiber. These include whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Eat less fat. Fats, particularly saturated fats and cholesterol, increase the risk for heart disease. Having type 2 diabetes puts you at greater risk for heart disease.
- Use less added sugar. You don't have to give up dessert if you have type 2 diabetes, but you should practice moderation. Many sugar-free, low-calorie and low-fat desserts are available. We also have many diabetic recipes in our health library.
- Don’t salt your food. When shopping or eating out, choose foods that are lower in sodium. Most of your daily sodium intake comes from processed foods.
• Engage in moderate to vigorous physically activity daily. Try to get at least 30 to 60 minutes of moderate exercise each day, which can help with weight management and blood sugar control. Your exercise program should include aerobic exercise, activities that increase your heart and breathing rates; strength training; and stretching exercises to increase your flexibility. Check with your health care provider before starting an exercise program.

• If your doctor has prescribed medications for you to take, it's important to balance the foods you eat with your medications and exercise to help maintain and manage blood sugar levels. Your doctor or dietitian can help you design a meal plan that works best for you and your lifestyle.

Sign up for “Living Well with Diabetes” classes today!

Call or come by the Extension Office at 211 DeQueen Street in Mena to sign up. Each participant will receive a three ring binder to keep all the hand-outs and recipes from the classes. Cost of each class is only $6 to cover the cost of supplies and the meal we will prepare.

1. Diabetes Overview
2. Taking Care of the Diabetic Body
3. Diabetes and Exercise
4. Meal Planning
5. Selecting Healthy Food

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