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NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH

How about celebrating a special occasion without junk food for a change? November is American Diabetes Month. It is the perfect time to acknowledge two of the best ways to prevent type 2 diabetes...by improving our eating and activity habits. If the current trend continues, it is projected that by 2030 almost the entire nation will be overweight. This means that the number of people with diabetes will continue to escalate and along with it, the dreaded complications of diabetes which include blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage leading to amputations, heart attacks and strokes.

“There’s an incredibly strong link between obesity and diabetes, (especially type 2) linked to the inability of the body to make use of sugars normally,” according to pediatric endocrinologist Francine Kaufman, president of the American Diabetes Association. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form, affecting 95 percent of the more than 17 million Americans who have the disease. This type was once referred to as adult or maturity onset diabetes as individuals over 40 years of age acquired it. Now almost half of the new cases diagnosed in children are type 2 diabetes. Since an estimated 20-30

percent of American children are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight, diabetes is called an emerging epidemic in youth. It has already achieved that status among adults. The diabetes related complications that children observed in their grandparents may appear in these same children before they grow into adulthood.

Now is the time for action. Celebrate American Diabetes Month (and every month) by increasing your awareness, knowledge and causes of diabetes. Then translate the information into daily skills than can help delay or prevent type 2 diabetes. Follow the Dietary Guidelines: Aim for Fitness; Build a Healthy Base; and Choose Sensibly. This is achieved by making small lifestyle changes that become permanent and add up to improved health. The good news is that a weight loss of as little as 7-10 pounds can make a positive difference in health; and any bit of physical activity can produce beneficial results.

Start celebrating American Diabetes Month by forgoing the second helping of food, or “super-sizing” in favor of a brisk walk among the fall leaves. Before you know it, your weight will drop and so will your risk of diabetes. Now that is something worth celebrating!

**Information provided by the Southern Michigan Diabetes Outreach Network
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