

## The Real Deal with Dr. Teal – Diabetes



One in four Canadians lives with some type of diabetes including undiagnosed diabetes and pre-diabetes according to the Canadian Diabetes Association.

As Canada's population continues to age health care costs directly related to diabetes had been expected to rise to more than \$8 billion annually by 2016<sup>1</sup>. The average life expectancy for Canadians is 81 and, as we live longer we're also prone to diseases such as diabetes at later stages in life.

I have patients living with high blood pressure, obesity and high cholesterol. Eventually some will develop diabetes completing what I call the “triad” formally known as metabolic syndrome.

HNHB CCAC care coordinators often work with diabetic patients who have complex care needs including diabetic foot, wound care or post stroke dialysis. People with diabetes can and should be encouraged to take proper care of themselves.

In the past, patient discussions were often focused on how people would eventually come to rely on the use of insulin. These days, insulin is being used earlier than ever before but blood sugar can be controlled better by using insulin and a combination of pills.

I tell my patients, *life happens and you have to work around it*. Compassion is important to show patients living with diabetes or any chronic illness. For some diabetics, their genetic makeup can mean they are going to carry a certain amount of weight. I tell my patients not to feel guilty about being overweight.

Our society is filled with fast food and processed food options that may not be the healthiest choice. My advice is for people to pay attention to food labels and start making better choices. All chain restaurants with 20 or more locations are now required to post calorie counts on menus and menu boards for each food item. That's a start in the right direction and will help people – especially those with living with diabetes or weight issues – make better decisions about healthy nutrition.

Check with your family doctor, HNHb Healthline or one of Ontario's diabetes education programs for information and assistance.

<http://www.hnhbhealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10891>

<https://www.diabetes.ca/>