

## Diabetes / Daily cleansing

**Carol:** A friend of mine was recently diagnosed with diabetes. She was very concerned and even seemed a little scared. It made me remember my mother's saying, "don't eat too much sugar or you'll get diabetes."

**Tammy:** I know what you mean, Carol. I faced that diagnosis myself. And until I understood a bit more about diabetes, I was also a bit afraid. But does eating too much sugar cause diabetes? I don't think I have heard that one before.

**Carol:** Well, Tammy, then let's talk about diabetes - Hello. I'm Carol, and we're here again on Women of Hope.

**Tammy:** I'm Tammy, and we are so pleased to have our nurse Julie with us again, welcome Julie. Let's have a cup of tea and talk about diabetes.

**Julie:** Thanks Tammy. And maybe I won't put any sugar in my tea (laugh). Actually Carol, your mother was right in a way, but diabetes is not one simple disease with one cause. Let's talk about it a bit more, because diabetes is a serious disease and there is no cure. Health experts say that more than 300 million people worldwide have diabetes and that number is growing rapidly. This is partly due to changes in how people eat and work in developing countries. But diabetes can be managed quite well, and what you eat is very important in managing it.

**Tammy:** Julie, it might be really good for us to start by explaining what diabetes is?

**Julie:** Diabetes is a long-term illness, that affects the way our bodies use digested food. Most of the food we eat is digested into a simple sugar called glucose. Glucose is the main source of fuel for the body. It's used by all our cells, for growth and energy. But the cells can't use the glucose unless there is *insulin* present. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas but in people with diabetes type 1, the pancreas produces little or no insulin. As a result, glucose builds up in the blood, overflows into the urine, and passes out of the body. So the body loses its main source of fuel even though the blood contains large amounts of glucose.

**Tammy:** Ok! Let's get this right; digested food becomes glucose – sugar...

**Carol:** ...but the body can't use it for energy if there's not enough insulin. You said that there's not enough insulin produced in diabetes *type 1*. How many types are there?

**Julie:** Three main types. Type 1 often starts in children or young people. In type 2 there is some insulin produced, but not enough, or the cells can't use it properly. That's the type that your mother warned you about; one of the causes is eating too much sugar. Type 2 usually come on in middle-aged people. The other main type is 'diabetes of pregnancy', and that usually gets better once the baby is born.

**Carol:** What about the symptoms of diabetes? How would someone know if they have it or not?

**Julie:** Well, people notice that they are always thirsty and need to drink, and then they pass urine a lot. They feel hungry and eat, but still lose weight and feel very tired. Often their eyesight is blurry. They might get a lot of infections, like sores that heal very slowly. When we test their urine, or their blood, we find it has a lot of glucose in it. And if the blood glucose gets really high, they can go into a

coma and even die. For type 2 diabetes, these symptoms often develop gradually and are not quite as obvious, but it causes some big problems.

**Tammy:** That sounds like it's really important to get treatment.

**Julie:** It certainly is. Diabetes is not a simple disease, and it's very serious. It can be a "silent killer". Only half of people with the disease know they have it and by the time they're diagnosed, many already have serious complications. If you don't get treatment, diabetes can severely damage your heart, your kidneys, your nerves... and your eyes. Sometimes people need to have their toes or feet amputated because infections don't heal. A man with severe diabetes may not be able to father a child. And a pregnant woman with diabetes really needs careful medical care to have a healthy baby. Let me say this seriously: if you feel you or another family member has symptoms of diabetes, you need to see your doctor or health care worker right away.

**Tammy:** Yes please, see your doctor or healthcare worker soon. Even if you are not sure, this is too serious to ignore.

OK, what sort of treatment is there for diabetes?

**Julie:** Well, type 1 patients need an injection of insulin every day - sometimes more.

**Carol:** ouch!

**Julie:** They get used to it, and it's much better than *not* treating it. But they also need to eat *regular, balanced* meals, and avoid sugar. They need to exercise each day. They must check their blood sugar levels at least once a day. That usually means just pricking their finger and getting a drop of blood to test. The health worker shows them how to do the test.

**Carol:** Now what about type 2 diabetes?

**Julie:** Type 2 diabetes has a lot more to do with how you live - though some nationalities, and some families, are more likely to get it. You're more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you're overweight, especially if you eat a lot of sugary food, carbohydrates like white rice or bread, and drink fizzy drinks, and if you don't do much exercise.

**Tammy:** So if I were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, could I control it if I changed my eating, and lost weight, and exercised?

**Julie:** You might - often that's all that's needed, though you would have to continue to test your sugar levels. But some people need to take tablets to help balance out their blood sugar, and some have insulin injections as well.

**Carol:** Now I've heard that sometimes the treatment makes the blood sugar go *too* low. Is that right?

**Julie:** Good question Carol. Yes, sometimes the blood sugar does go too low- that's called *hypoglycaemia*. Maybe the person had too much insulin, or maybe they didn't eat enough for some reason. The person feels weak, sweaty, shaky, and sick. They might feel confused, and have tingling lips. How do you think they could get their blood sugar to rise?

**Tammy:** I guess they could eat some sugar...?

**Julie:** That's the right idea. A person with diabetes usually carry a few sweets with them, so they can suck one if they feel these symptoms. They get used to the difference between having too little blood sugar, and too much.

If they've eaten *too much* food, or not had enough insulin, their blood sugar would go too high. Then they would feel very thirsty and drowsy, they might have blurry eyes, and they would need to pass urine often. Then they would need an extra insulin injection.

**Carol:** I see...so when the blood sugar gets high it's just like the original symptoms of diabetes again - very thirsty, needing to pass urine, blurry vision...

**Julie:** That's right. People with diabetes really need to learn their own symptoms. They need to be responsible for taking their medications and eating regular, balanced meals. They can be well and live full lives, but they will always have to think about their diabetes and manage it properly, with the help of doctors and health workers. If they get skin infections and sores, they must treat them right away. And this is important - if you have diabetes and you're planning to have a baby, please see a doctor first and get good care right from the beginning.

**Tammy:** You said some women get diabetes *when* they're pregnant.

**Julie:** Yes, and that's another good reason to see your health worker regularly while you're pregnant, because they'll test your sugar levels. Pregnant women don't always have many symptoms but it's important to manage it well in order to have a healthy baby. As I said, it usually gets better after the baby is born. However if you've had this kind of diabetes, you need to be careful with your food and exercise so you don't get type 2 diabetes later.

**Carol:** Well Julie, we've learned a lot from you today about diabetes. The thing I really want to remember is to go to the doctor if I find I'm always really thirsty, passing urine a lot, and losing weight, or if wounds won't heal.

**Tammy:** I don't want to have diabetes at all, but I am type 2. So, good exercise, keeping my weight a healthy level, and avoiding sweets keeps me healthy.

**Carol:** We've been talking to our friend and nurse, Julie about the illness Diabetes. She explained that if you have diabetes, you can get treated and be well, but will always need to watch out for signs, and live carefully so it doesn't take over and ruin your life. Every day you need to eat properly, take your medicines and check that your blood sugar is ok.

In a way, it's like that when you begin to follow Jesus. You realize you are sick in your spirit because of the wrong things you think and do. You ask God to forgive you and heal your spirit. You accept that Jesus took your sins, and from then on you know that God has forgiven and accepted you. God gives you a new heart, a new nature.

But does that mean you're suddenly perfect?

**Julie:** Well, I know I'm not perfect! The Bible says that part of us still wants to live to please ourselves. Sometimes I want to get my own way, or be greedy or lazy. Sometimes I can hurt others.

**Tammy:** That's so true for me too. It shows that the old part of me is still there.

**Carol:** So how can we live better? God *is* healing us. We need to *trust him* to take away our sins, and we need to do that all our lives. We call this God's grace. He is kind and he forgives us, and helps us to grow more like Jesus. We can't become better people unless God helps us all the time, because *we're* not strong enough, we keep falling down. We need to trust God to work inside us, to help us to love the good things that he loves.

**Tammy:** Let me read you something from God's word the Bible. Paul, one of the first leaders of the Christians, wrote: 'Tell me one thing: did you receive God's Spirit by following rules and doing what the Jewish law requires, or by hearing God's good news of Jesus, and believing it? How can you be so foolish! You began by God's Spirit's power; do you think you are strong enough to finish by your *own* power?' (Gal 3:2-3)

**Julie:** We can't heal ourselves, we can't just make ourselves better, it has to be *God* working inside us. And that's exactly what he wants to do!

But we also need to decide to *let* God work in us. Remember that we talked about eating regular balanced meals, and exercising, to manage diabetes? This is the same - we need to *feed* our new life, our new nature. We can do that by reading God's word, or listening to Bible teaching. Maybe you can go to a church to hear God's word, or listen to Women of Hope. You could learn parts of the Bible by heart and think about what it means. Isn't that better than filling our minds with bad things? And we feed our new self when we pray and *ask God* to make us more wise and strong. We can ask God to help us understand what is right and wrong, and be strong to say no to what is wrong.

Then we need to *exercise* our new nature. We do that by *doing* what God's word tells us. When we understand what he wants us to do, we can decide to go and do it, with his help. For example, Jesus said, 'love your neighbor as you love yourself.' Imagine what would happen if we all did that? And he told us not to be unfaithful to our husbands and wives, and not to tell lies, or get drunk. That might mean turning our backs on the things that tempted us before.

**Tammy:** Do you know what happens then? Gradually, we change. We might still be tempted, but as we obey God, our character changes...we love what God loves.

You know, we will never be perfect while we live on earth. We'll always be tempted in some ways, and make mistakes. God knows that, and he has given us a way to deal with it. It's the same way as he made for us to get right with him in the first place. Remember, Jesus died to take away our sins and make us friends with God. God forgives us when we're really sorry, and trust him to forgive us.

**Julie:** And just like a person with diabetes needs to check their sugar levels every day, we need to check ourselves every day. Then every time we realize we've done something wrong, or thought something wrong, we can pray to God and say sorry, and ask him to forgive us. There's a part of the Bible I learnt by heart to remind me of this. It says, 'If we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right; he will forgive our sins and wash us clean from all our wrong-doing.' (1 John 1:9)

**Tammy:** I love that. Let's learn it together, so we can always remind ourselves of what to do. Would you like to say it after me?

'If we confess our sins to God...  
he will keep his promise and do what is right...  
he will forgive our sins...  
and wash us clean from all our wrong-doing'...

**Carol:** Jesus said it's like having a bath in the morning, but you still get your feet dirty and you need to wash them when you come home. (John 13:10) God has washed us clean, but we need to come back and get cleaned up from the things in life that make us feel dirty.

**Tammy:** God *will* give us a new start. You might have heard this famous story from the Bible about King David. (2 Samuel 11-12)

David did love God, and he knew that God was with him. But after he became king over the people of Israel, he made a terrible mistake. His army was away fighting their enemies, but this time David decided to stay home. He looked down from his roof terrace, and he saw his neighbour's wife, washing herself. Bathsheba was a beautiful woman, and David wanted her. So he sent for her, and had sex with her, and she became pregnant.

Now David knew that he had done wrong, but next he did something even worse. Bathsheba's husband was an army officer, and David arranged for him to come home on leave. He thought Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, would be happy to see his wife again, and they would sleep together, and then Uriah would think he was the father of the baby. But Uriah said he was still on active duty and he wouldn't go home - he was an honourable man. Now David was desperate, so he sent a message to his general to put Uriah where the fighting was fierce, so he would die in the battle. So Uriah died, and David thought no-one would know what he had done.

But God knew. And God was angry, and sent his prophet with a message to David, saying he would punish David.

**Carol:** And what did David do? Did he tell lies, or threaten the prophet, or try to make excuses? No. His first words were: 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And he wrote a prayer that is still in the Bible today. It says this:

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love.  
Wash away all my evil  
And make me clean from my sins!  
I recognize my faults:  
I am always conscious of my sins.  
I have sinned against you - only against you -  
And done what you consider evil  
So you are right in judging me.  
Remove my sin, and I will be clean:  
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me... (Ps 51, TEV)

**Julie:** That sounds like he was really very sorry, doesn't it? And God's prophet said to him, 'The Lord forgives you, you shall not die.'

Some very hard things happened because of what David did, but he truly trusted in God and he realized that God really did forgive him and give him a new start.

**Carol:** God will give you a new start too, if you are truly sorry and trust him to wash you clean inside, and help you.

**Tammy:** And remember we need to check ourselves each day, feed our spirits with God's word, and exercise our new natures by doing what God tells us. That's the way to a healthy spirit!

**Carol:** Well it's time for us to go. We would always love to hear from you, and pray for you.

**Julie:** Thank you for having me today, and I hope we can get together again soon.

**Tammy:** Goodbye, and God bless you and your family today.

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