



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

What You Should Know about Diabetes and Heart Disease

National Diabetes Awareness Month — November 2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

[Matthew Reynolds] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly broadcast of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Matthew Reynolds. For people with diabetes, blood sugar is not the only thing to monitor. Adults with diabetes have a higher risk of dying from heart disease than those without diabetes. However, a recent CDC study found that the number of adults over 35 with diabetes who report having heart disease has begun to drop. Among African Americans, this decrease is even more encouraging.

Nilka Rios Burrows, a researcher with CDC's Diabetes Translation program, is here to discuss the relationship between diabetes and heart disease and offer some suggestions to improve health. Welcome to the show, Ms. Burrows.

[Ms. Burrows] Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

[Matthew Reynolds] Ms. Burrows, why are people who have diabetes especially at risk for heart disease?

[Ms. Burrows] There are certain conditions that happen in people with diabetes that put you at for heart disease, such as high blood sugar, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol. And the problem is that these conditions happen before the onset and diagnosis of diabetes.

[Matthew Reynolds] Before we talk about the results of your study, how would someone would know if they might have heart disease?

[Ms. Burrows] One sign of heart disease is angina which is pain or discomfort in your chest, shoulders, arms, or back, especially when you exercise. The pain may go away when you rest or if you take angina medicine. Angina does not cause permanent damage to the heart muscle but if you have angina you have a greater risk of having a heart attack.

[Matthew Reynolds] So for our listeners who might be concerned that they might be suffering from angina, you would suggest then that they see a health care provider to check that out?

[Ms. Burrows] That's absolutely right.

[Matthew Reynolds] If a person has diabetes, what do they need to know about managing it and staying as healthy as possible?

[Ms. Burrows] People with diabetes need to be smart about their heart and control the ABCs of diabetes. That is A1C for managing blood sugar, B for blood pressure, and C for cholesterol.

[Matthew Reynolds] Are there other things that people can do to help prevent diabetes or, if they already have diabetes, prevent further health complications?

[Ms. Burrows] The best news is that you really don't have to knock yourself out to prevent diabetes. Researchers have found that life style changes, such as modest weight loss, regular exercise, eating right can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes, especially among adults at higher risk of the disease. There are also more effective ways of preventing or treating the complications of diabetes among those who have the disease. If you or a family member has diabetes, talk to your doctor and get checked.

[Matthew Reynolds] Returning to your study, you found some encouraging news about the rates of cardiovascular disease among people with diabetes. What did you find?

[Ms. Burrows] The CDC report found that the proportion of adults with diabetes who are age 35 years or older who reported having a cardiovascular disease condition dropped by 11 percent between 1997 and 2005. In some population groups, the decrease in prevalence was even greater than this overall decrease of 11 percent. Particularly encouraging decreases were seen among blacks with a decline in prevalence of 25 percent, and also among persons with diabetes age 35 to 64 years with a decrease of 14 percent.

[Matthew Reynolds] Well that certainly is good news that those trends are moving in favor for people who have diabetes and cardiovascular disease. What does that mean for someone who does have diabetes and may be concerned about cardiovascular disease or may have cardiovascular disease?

[Ms. Burrows] Well, the findings in this report are encouraging, but it does not mean that we need to stop what we're doing and say "job well done." What it means is that we need to continue our efforts to prevent heart disease with renewed energy and commitment. Like I said before, people with diabetes need to be smart about their heart and control the ABCs of diabetes. That is again A1C for managing blood sugar, B for blood pressure, and C for cholesterol.

[Matthew Reynolds] Where would you recommend our listeners go for more information about diabetes and cardiovascular disease?

[Ms. Burrows] They can find out more from our website at www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

[Matthew Reynolds] Ms. Burrows, thanks for taking the time to share this information with our listeners today.

[Ms. Burrows] Thank you for the opportunity.

[Matthew Reynolds] Well, that's it for this week's show. Don't forget to join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Matthew Reynolds for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit www.cdc.gov.