November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Did you know that an estimated 21,000 people in the Upper Peninsula have diabetes and about 40% of people between the ages of 45 and 70 in the U.P. have pre-diabetes? (UPDON, 2010)

Diabetes is a disease that affects how the body uses blood glucose. Glucose is the main source of energy for the cells that make up muscle and tissue. If a person has diabetes, it means they have too much glucose in the blood which can lead to serious health problems.

There are several types of diabetes including Type 1, Type 2, pre-diabetes and gestational diabetes.

Symptoms vary among the different types. A person may experience some, none, or all of the following symptoms:
- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Extreme hunger
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing sores
- Frequent infections, such as gum or skin infections and vaginal or bladder infections

Type 1 Diabetes cannot be prevented, but the following risk factors make a person more susceptible to developing Type 2 Diabetes and pre-diabetes:
- Weight
- Inactivity
- Family history
- Race
- Age

- Gestational diabetes
- Polycystic ovary syndrome
- High blood pressure, high blood sugar and abnormal blood fats — occurring together with obesity, they are associated with resistance to insulin.

How can Type 2 and pre-diabetes be prevented?

- Eat healthy foods. Choose foods low in fat and calories. Focus on fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Get more physical activity. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.
- Lose excess pounds. (Mayo Clinic, 2010a)
Pancreatic Cancer

The Pancreas is an organ located behind the abdomen; it secretes enzymes that aid digestion and hormones that help regulate the metabolism of sugars. Pancreatic cancer is found in the tissues of the pancreas and typically spreads rapidly (Mayo Clinic, 2010b). Signs and symptoms may not appear until it is quite advanced, but the following are signs and symptoms to be aware of:

- Dark urine, pale stools, yellow skin and eyes from jaundice
- Pain in the upper part of the belly
- Pain in the middle part of the back that does not go away with shifting positions
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stools that float in the toilet

Doctors cannot pin down exactly what it is that causes pancreatic cancer, but there are certain risk factors that may make it more likely for a person to develop pancreatic cancer.

- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Family history of pancreatic cancer
- Inflammation of the pancreas
- Obesity (National Cancer Institute, 2010).

There is no proven way to prevent pancreatic cancer, but there are actions a person can take to reduce the risk:

- Quit smoking
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly (Mayo Clinic, 2010b).

Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness

Pulmonary hypertension occurs when the arteries and capillaries in the lungs become narrow, blocked, or destroyed. When the arteries get smaller, it makes it hard for the blood to travel through the lungs, causing a build-up in pressure. That makes the heart have to work really hard to pump the blood through the lungs. Eventually the heart begins to weaken and fail from working so hard (Mayo Clinic, 2010c).

There are two kinds of pulmonary hypertension, one that runs in the family and one that is related to another condition, usually heart or lung disease (MedlinePlus, 2010). Symptoms of pulmonary hypertension are generally not real noticeable in the early stages, but they get worse as the disease progresses. Signs and symptoms to be aware of include:

- Shortness of breath (dyspnea), initially while exercising and eventually while at rest
- Fatigue
- Dizziness or fainting spells (syncope)
- Chest pressure or pain
- Swelling (edema) in your ankles, legs and eventually in your abdomen (ascites)
- Bluish color to your lips and skin (cyanosis)
- Racing pulse or heart palpitations

It is important to check with your doctor if you experience some of these signs and symptoms (Mayo Clinic, 2010c).
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) includes several lung diseases that block airflow and make it increasingly difficult for a person to breathe. The main conditions that make up COPD are Emphysema and chronic bronchitis, but COPD can also refer to damage caused by chronic asthmatic bronchitis. COPD is a leading cause of death and illness worldwide. The biggest cause of COPD is long-term smoking and can be prevented by not smoking. It is important to focus on prevention because damage to the lungs cannot be reversed. Most symptoms of COPD do not show up until a significant amount of lung damage has already occurred.

Emphysema
Signs and symptoms of emphysema include:
- Shortness of breath, especially during physical activities
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness

Chronic bronchitis
Chronic bronchitis occurs mainly in smokers. People who continue to smoke may go on to develop emphysema, but in smokers who are able to quit, the cough may clear in a few days or weeks.
- Having to clear your throat first thing in the morning, especially if you smoke
- A chronic cough that produces yellowish sputum
- Shortness of breath in the later stages
- Frequent respiratory infections (Mayo Clinic, 2009).

American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout

An estimated 46 million adults in the United States currently smoke, and approximately half will die prematurely from smoking. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for men and women and more than 80% of lung cancers are thought to result from smoking. Smoking causes nearly one in five deaths from all causes.

“The American Cancer Society is marking the 35th Great American Smokeout on November 18 by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life – one that can lead to reducing cancer risk. Quitting smoking is not easy, but it can be done. To have the best chance of quitting successfully, you need to know what you’re up against, what your options are, and where to go for help.”

Check out the American Cancer Society Website at http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index to view the following information:
- Guide to quitting smoking
- Benefits of quitting
- Computer tools to help quit
- Cigarette Cost Calculator
- Help for Quitting (American Cancer Society, 2010).
What’s Going on With Wellness?

1. **American Heart Association Start! Walking Program:** Sign up at www.startwalkingnow.org to have access to a great physical activity and nutrition tracking program, as well as many other wellness resources. Make sure to sign up under Northern Michigan University.

2. **Campus Trekkers:** Wellness representatives are walking with faculty and staff four days a week in five different buildings on campus. Join us for a great 30 minute walk with little bursts of stretching and toning exercises throughout the walk.

3. **Wellness Habit Hour:** Thursday, November 18 from 12-1 p.m. is the final Wellness Habit Hour of the semester. Barb Coleman will be speaking on “How Much is Enough?” What does exercise really do and how can you fit it into YOUR life? Snacks will be provided.

4. **Family Fitness Event:** Sunday, November 21 from 1-2 p.m. is the last family fitness event of the semester. Join us at the PEIF for a circuit/obstacle course suitable for all ages. Email wellness@nmu.edu with names & ages to get your family signed up.

5. **Pre-Turkey Day Blood Pressure Screening:** There will be nursing students set up in several buildings around campus on November 22 to take your blood pressure if you would like. They will also have handouts with blood pressure information. Check your email for buildings and times.

6. **Fitness for the Holidays:** Check your email as winter break approaches for information about our Fitness for the Holidays programs.

7. **Get In, Get Out, Get Well:** If you are interested in having wellness staff come to your office to do educational and fitness sessions, please email wellness@nmu.edu. We will be scheduling offices for next semester.

8. **Wednesday Wellness Tips:** Keep checking out the wellness tips every week along with the Tune Into Wellness YouTube Videos with Wildcat Willy. We have some great videos coming your way!

9. **Wildcat Wellness Connection Newsletter:** There will be one more newsletter for the semester released the first week of December so make sure to check it out!

**REFERENCES:**


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[Check out www.nmu.edu/wellness]