

DIABETES LURKS AS A DARK DISEASE AFFECTING MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, BUT *GET GOING OREGON!* FIGHTS BACK BY SHEDDING LIGHT ON ITS PREVENTION THROUGH HEALTHY LIVING

There is a killer among us. Its identity might surprise you. It smacks of sweetness; it permeates everything we love. It's also indiscriminate and insidious, afflicting both young and old alike. The killer's name is **diabetes**.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in America. More people die from diabetes and related conditions than breast cancer or AIDS combined. Diabetes is a condition that prevents your body from making and using insulin in the proper way. Without insulin, too much sugar remains in your bloodstream instead of moving to your cells to produce energy. This can cause serious complications and for many sufferers this can mean heart disease, high blood pressure, amputations and eventual death. Being obese can be directly tied to the onset of diabetes. As Americans, we are super-sizing ourselves right into the doctors' offices.

The hard facts about diabetes:

- One in three kids under 20 will be affected by diabetes in their lifetime; one in 200 already has this disease.
- In all, 25.8 million children and adults suffer from diabetes in the United States today.
- Two out of three people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.
- 80 million people have pre-diabetes; nine out of ten don't know it.

Reacting to the statistics, the national outcry to promote healthier living—eat better and exercise more—is growing louder. In Washington DC, Michele Obama has made it her mission to champion better health through her White House vegetable garden and her “Let's Move” exercise campaign. Locally, Oregon is also making national headlines.

The Harold Schnitzer Diabetes Health Center (HSDHC) at Oregon Health Science University (OHSU) is the only facility of its kind on the west coast and is pioneering personal diabetes care, public outreach, clinical research, education and advocating national public policy. *Get Going Oregon! (GGO!)* is a campaign to raise awareness and funds for the prevention and treatment of diabetes at HSDHC. *GGO!* is recruiting teams to join in the kick off fitness fair and 5K walk on October 1 and to participate in the month long challenge to get healthier for

30 minutes a day for 30 days. Participants can sign up at <http://GetGoingOregon.org>.

"Get Going Oregon!" encourages Oregonians to get moving and turn their health around to slow down or stop the onset of diabetes. We need to change our habits and we've found walking or moving for 30 minutes a day for 30 days makes a real difference in overall health," says Arlene Schnitzer whose husband, philanthropist, Harold Schnitzer, lived with diabetes and is the namesake for the center.

GGO invites Oregon friends, families and colleagues to create teams and challenge each other to do something active everyday for the entire month of October. In that time, participants revamping their lifestyles will feel less chronic pain, lose weight and improve their overall level of fitness.

"We know for a fact that getting 150 minutes or more per week (30 minutes or more five days per week) of moderately intense aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, substantially lowers one's risk of dying prematurely and focusing on one habit in the form of a 30-day challenge is a clear, effective way to make a positive behavior change," says Don Kain, registered dietitian and exercise physiologist from the HSDHC.

"Get Going Oregon!" is a great way to help all people in our state be healthier and more active, making an especially big difference for those who are at risk for developing diabetes or who already suffer from the disease and its side effects ," says Dan Occhipinti, Portland attorney, GGO! steering committee chair and diabetes patient. "We want this to become a classic tradition like Cycle Oregon to get kids off their couches and get them to head outside and get moving. We also want to help adults find ways to incorporate active living into each day. Our aim is to change people's lives for the better, permanently."

The GGO! Activity Challenge and Health Fair, includes a non-competitive 5K walk along the Willamette River and health fair at the OHSU South Waterfront campus. Everyone is invited to join the fun at the *Get Going Oregon!* launch event. Live entertainment, food vendors, yoga and Zumba demonstrations and activities for the kids are free to enjoy. Also on hand, free health screenings are available to those who need to know more about their body's health status. The *Get Going Oregon!* kickoff takes place throughout Oregon, October 1, in

Portland, Salem, Roseburg, Warm Springs and Bend and will be highlighted on each community's *GGO!* website (<http://GetGoingOregon.org>).

Participants collect pledges to support their month-long efforts. Funds raised by *Get Going Oregon!* will help expand comprehensive education for healthy living and diabetes awareness and prevention.

Surprisingly, for all its alarming statistics, diabetes has kept a relatively low profile in American mainstream consciousness. Through *Get Going Oregon!* and the HSDHC, the importance of living a healthy life will come to light—both for fighting and preventing the onset of diabetes and in spreading awareness of its causes, symptoms, complications, and treatment. With public education and awareness leading to a healthy lifestyle, these alarming statistics can be reversed.

About the Harold Schnitzer Diabetes Health Center at OHSU

The Harold Schnitzer Diabetes Health Center was established in 2008. Its mission is to enhance the lives of those affected by diabetes in the Pacific Northwest through unequalled personal care and education, improved medical provider education, innovative collaborations and advocacy for health and wellness. The goal is to help its patients directly, and Oregonians indirectly, to delay the onset or better manage existing cases of diabetes and to maximize their quality of life. *Get Going Oregon!* is aimed at improving the health of citizens in our region and to accelerate the Center's goal of reducing the impact, incidence and prevalence of diabetes and diabetes related health issues such as obesity among children, teens and adults by bringing much needed diabetes prevention awareness and to afford a unique platform to support ongoing healthy lifestyles. Visit www.GetGoingOregon.org

Sources of information:

American Diabetes Association web site, www.diabetes.org facts and figures
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US Center for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/diabetes, general info
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