Type 2 Diabetes – Fact Sheet

Type 2 diabetes also referred to as maturity onset or non-insulin diabetes, is the most common type of diabetes that primarily affects middle aged individuals that are overweight. Insulin resistance and impaired B-cell function are associated with the development of type 2 diabetes. Insulin resistance occurs as the body does not know how to respond to insulin, therefore cannot use it correctly resulting in persistent hyperglycaemia. The pancreas may then secrete too much insulin (hyperinsulinaemia) in a method to try and compensate for insulin resistance as well as the high blood sugar levels. Risk factors that contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes are often genetic and environmental in nature and can include:

- Obesity
- Age
- Family history
- Metabolic syndrome
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diet
- Tobacco smoking

These factors contribute to excess fat being stored around the waist line, high blood pressure and obesity. The build-up of glucose in the blood can result in the destruction of beta cells, cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, peripheral vascular disease, eye diseases and diabetic neuropathy.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Dizziness
- Pain in hands, feet and legs
- Bladder infections
- Gastrointestinal disturbances
- Gastroparesis
- Diarrhoea
- Constipation
- Impotence

Low GI Foods

The glycaemic index (GI) is the way in which carbohydrates are measured in terms of how much they will or will not affect blood glucose levels. Foods that are have a high GI encourage blood glucose levels to rise rapidly, which can be dangerous to diabetics as what rises so quickly then falls just as quickly, but below normal range. Low GI foods are more favourable for diabetics as they naturally have higher blood glucose levels. These foods are able to stabilise glucose levels and may delay hunger, control appetite, assist with weight loss and improve cellular sensitivity to insulin.

Dietary Inclusions

- Fresh fruits and vegetables – generally speaking most are low GI, however if consuming high GI sources eat in moderation and with other foods.
- Complex carbohydrates – as they are naturally low GI and rich in B vitamins.
- Lean protein from animal and plant based sources.
- Essential fatty acids.

Dietary Exclusions

- Avoid alcohol, refined foods, caffeine, sugar (including artificial sugars) and soft drinks.
- Avoid trans fats, deep fried foods and oxidised fats.
- Avoid smoked and cured foods.

Other Suggestions

- Manage stress – stress can increase blood sugar levels thereby affecting how the body uses insulin. Yoga, meditation, exercise and counselling may be effective solutions.
- Exercise – improves insulin sensitivity particular high intensity internal training (HIIT), therefore aiming for 30mins of exercise daily is recommended.

Customised nutritional plans comprising of a specific food plan with the support of nutrient/herbal supplements can be very effective in the management of diabetes. If you require support please visit www.good4younutrition.com.au