

IT'S ABOUT TIME WE DETECTED SILENT UNDIAGNOSED TYPE 2 DIABETES

New research has found that only 5% of Australians aged over 40 have had a type 2 diabetes risk check in the past two years.

Also, more than half of people surveyed were unable name any diabetes related complication despite type 2 diabetes being a leading cause of vision loss, kidney damage, heart attacks, stroke and limb amputation.

The release of the research comes at the start of National Diabetes Week as Diabetes Australia launches a new campaign, *It's About Time*, to raise awareness of the seriousness of the type 2 diabetes, and urge 500,000 Australians who could have undiagnosed type 2 diabetes to get checked.

Diabetes Australia CEO Professor Greg Johnson said there was great concern about the length of time many people have silent, undiagnosed type 2 diabetes without it being diagnosed.

"It's about time we detected silent undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. Many people have type 2 diabetes for up to seven years before being diagnosed and during that time up to half begin to develop a diabetes-related complication," Professor Johnson said.

"The tragedy is that much of the damage to the body that causes diabetes-related complications like vision loss, kidney damage, heart attack, stroke and limb amputation is preventable.

"AUSDRISK is a free, online risk assessment you can take to determine your risk of type 2 diabetes. Despite over 60% of Australians having risk factors for type 2 diabetes, the research shows only 5% of Australians over the age of 40 have done the type 2 diabetes risk assessment in past two years" he said.

The survey found:

- Only 21% of Australians over the age of 40 had heard of the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk (AUSDRISK) Assessment;
- Only 5% of Australians over the age of 40 had completed the AUSDRISK assessment in the past two years; and
- More than 51% of people over the age of 18 were unable to name any serious diabetes-related complication despite type 2 diabetes being a leading cause of vision loss and blindness, limb amputation, kidney damage, heart attacks and stroke.

Diabetes NSW & ACT CEO Sturt Eastwood urged people take the free type 2 diabetes risk assessment today.

"Type 2 diabetes is the single biggest challenge confronting Australia's health system and it's time we did a better job of detecting type 2 diabetes earlier," Mr Eastwood said.

"The earlier a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes occurs, the sooner a management plan can be put in place delivering better outcomes for the individual and the community.

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MEDIA RELEASE



“The AUSDRISK check only takes about five minutes. If you take the check and get a high score, see your doctor so they can determine if you have type 2 diabetes.

“If you are diagnosed there is a lot of support and advice, and many effective treatments available to help you manage type 2 diabetes and reduce the risk of developing diabetes-related complications.”

Professor Lesley Campbell from St. Vincent’s Hospital said front line health professionals were spending more and more time treating patients who present with type 2 diabetes complications. Diabetes was often still undiagnosed until admission for heart attack, stroke or lung or heart transplantation.

“Unfortunately we are seeing people with type 2 diabetes diagnosed too late and the impact of late diagnosis and lack of treatment is filling our hospital beds,” Professor Campbell said.

“Diabetes is ranked in the top ten causes of death in Australia and is the leading cause of preventable blindness, limb amputation and end stage kidney disease.

“Much of this can be avoided with early diagnosis and optimal treatment.”

For Sydney woman Belinda Nakauta, having her toe amputated because of type 2 diabetes was a major wake up call.

“I went to the doctor about a urinary tract infection and he suggested I get checked for type 2 diabetes. I was shocked when it came back positive and the scary thing is I have no idea about how long I was living with type 2 diabetes before I was assessed,” Ms Nakauta said.

“Having a toe amputated a couple of years ago was a wakeup call. Having a part of your body cut off, no matter how small, is a scary experience. With the help of a dietitian and regular gym visits, I’ve lost more than 20 kilograms and dramatically cut back on the medication I need to manage my type 2 diabetes.

“I wish I had done something five or ten years ago. I don’t want to be that person in the ICU on dialysis. I don’t want to have foot complications or lose my eye sight. I don’t want to be that person.

“It was about time I started taking my diabetes seriously and I hope my story helps convince all Australians that it is about time we do something about diabetes.”

Further information about the campaign is available at www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/itsabouttime

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Diabetes Australia is the national body for people affected by all types of diabetes and those at risk. Diabetes Australia is committed to reducing the impact of diabetes. We work in partnership with diabetes health professionals, researchers and the community to minimise the impact of diabetes.

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