

YourHealthNews

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WHO launches campaign to increase awareness in beating Diabetes

Last 7 April, World Health Organization (WHO) launched *World Health Day 2016: Beat Diabetes*.

This health program is primarily aimed at raising awareness on diabetes. The campaign is geared towards supporting a stronger health system, which will enable solutions to confront the growing number of diabetics worldwide.

Actions that are included are ways to prevent diabetes, and early detection, diagnosis and management of diabetics.

On WHO estimates, diabetes accounts approximately 350 million

people globally. In 2012 alone, more than one million deaths are attributed to this chronic disease as its cause.

Between the two forms of diabetes, type 2 has a larger figure of diabetics

in comparison to type 1. More than 90 percent are people with type 2 diabetes according to the organization.

Though diabetes is on

the rise, it is also important to note that type 2 diabetes is also a preventable disease, and its onset can be delayed through lifestyle modifications that include having a

balanced and nutritious diet, exercising regularly, and maintaining a normal body weight.

Although a chronic condition, diabetes can be controlled and complications prevented. Early diagnosis and proper management, along with patient compliance, are essential in tackling diabetes and its complications.

With an ageing population and rising number of obese, the number of diabetics will surge. Nevertheless, actions that will strengthen our health systems, together with the government's desire to create policies that will help mitigate this chronic disease, will enable us to win against diabetes. And the time to start acting on it is today.



SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES

- fatigue, frequent urination (polyuria), excessive thirst (polydipsia)
- frequent fungal or bacterial infections
- blurred vision
- loss of sensation/numbness
- poor wound healing

Drinking coffee may lower the risk of colorectal cancer

It has been known that coffee has antioxidant properties that are important to the general health of the body.

Recently, a study conducted by the University of Southern California found that coffee may contribute to overall colorectal health.¹ The team of researchers investigated the association between coffee consumption and the risk of bowel or colorectal cancer. They examined more than 5000 men and women diagnosed with colorectal cancer (CRC) within the past six months, and more than 4000 men and women without history of CRC. In both groups, data on coffee consumption were collected, including other data that are known to be related to colorectal cancer, such as family history of CRC, smoking, diet and physical activity.

In this population-based case-control study, results showed that consumption of coffee, regardless of type of coffee, lowers the likelihood of developing bowel cancer by 26%. They also found out that when the participants increase their intake of coffee to more than 2.5 servings per day their risk is decreased. With these results, they concluded that coffee consumption may lower the risk of CRC in a dose-dependent manner.

Although, the results of this study is promising in the primary prevention of CRC, the researchers also acknowledged that further research is needed to establish this association.

Amongst various types of cancers, bowel cancer is the 4th leading cause of cancer deaths, behind lung,



liver and stomach.

Prognosis and success of management in CRC depends on the spread of the disease, where local tumor has better results compared to overt spread to other organs. Thus, early detection of CRC is essential.

Patients with family history of CRC, rectal bleeding and unexplained weight loss need to consult their medical practitioners.

Shingles vaccine found to be effective

Herpes zoster, or usually known as shingles, is a common dermatologic condition that is caused by the reactivation of a latent varicella zoster virus, a virus that also causes chickenpox. It usually manifests as a particularly painful rash in a certain area that is mainly supplied by a single spinal nerve, medically termed dermatome.

Since this condition can reactivate and can significantly affect the quality of life of affected individuals, especially older people, the introduction of a vaccine to prevent shingles has been an important breakthrough

since the new millennium started.

In a recent Cochrane review², which included 13 randomized controlled trials, showed that herpes zoster vaccine is effective in preventing herpes zoster disease amongst older people, whose age is 60 years and older. It provides protection in this age group up to three years. Furthermore, it is also found out to have caused few adverse effects, which are mostly mild to moderate in nature.

With this review, herpes zoster vaccine is established to be safe and effective as a preventive measure for shingles.

Earplugs can prevent hearing loss

Our sense of hearing is one of the most important senses we have, and it is also often the most neglected. Rising number of hearing loss, specifically noise-induced hearing loss, is observed worldwide. This type of acquired hearing loss is usually

caused by occupational noise from machinery and explosions, and recreational noise from personal audio devices, concerts, clubs, bars and sporting events. It is estimated that approximately more than 1 billion people between the age of 12 and 35 are at risk of developing hearing loss because of exposure to loud sounds.

To address recreational

noise that results in temporary hearing loss, a study conducted in the Netherlands among festival-goers³, revealed that earplugs worn during the duration of the festival

visit, prevented temporary hearing loss associated with excessive exposure to loud sounds. This randomized clinical trial, which was conducted between two groups (earplug group and unprotected group), showed significant

difference between the two, in both objective and subjective measures. Hearing loss was measured objectively by temporary threshold shifts (TTS), which was observed to be higher in the unprotected group compared to the group that were wearing earplugs. After exposure to 3 and 4 kHz, the frequency known to cause threshold shifts in noise damage, those wearing earplugs have shown increase thresholds lower than those who were not protected by it. Subjectively, those with earplugs

have also reported less occurrence of tinnitus or ringing in the ear compared to those in the unprotected group.

With this clinical trial, earplugs are valid, safe and effective preventive measure for hearing loss acquired in situations where exposure to excessive noise or sounds is apparent.

Consult to a medical practitioner is advised when symptoms of hearing loss such as tinnitus occur.

References:

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3. Ramakers GGJ, Kraaijenga VJC, Cattani G, van Zanten GA and Grolman W. Effectiveness of earplugs in preventing recreational noise-induced hearing loss: A randomized clinical trial. 2016. *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* DOI:10.1001/jamaoto.2016.0225.