



Diabetes and your brain

Don't think your diabetes has an effect on your cognition? Think again! Controlling your blood glucose levels not only will keep your body healthy...it will keep your brain in top shape too! In fact, out of control blood-glucose could cause permanent damage and will hinder all aspects of cognition.

So here's the deal: high blood glucose (blood sugar) levels lead to the stiffening of arteries in the brain. This means that there is insufficient oxygen and nutrients reaching your brain cells. In other words, high glucose levels equals diffuse cell death. Often times, people with diabetes complain of memory loss or inattention. And this is part of the problem. So what can you do? Well, try your best to control your glucose levels and you should be just fine! Don't panic...but don't ignore your health either. We've put together some tips to help you keep your blood glucose in check.

Exercise

If you hate working out then you won't like this much either! As we all know, anyone can benefit from exercise. But why you in particular? If you have Type 2 Diabetes, physical activity will improve your body's sensitivity to insulin and will help get those glucose levels under control. This is a no brainer! Get moving! (But consult your doctor first).

Eating Healthy

Too much bad news for one day? While it may seem hard to change your eating habits from burgers and pizza to lettuce and tofu (okay, you don't have to get THAT carried away), eating healthy can go a long way when it comes to controlling your blood glucose levels. Eating at regular times will help your body control its glucose as well, so try eating three meals a day at set times. Keep in mind that the more sugar you eat, the higher your blood glucose will be. Overweight? Its going to be a bit tougher for you to keep the glucose levels in control. It is a good idea to maintain a healthy weight. Foods high in fibre are great- they will keep you feeling full and may lower those glucose levels. Stop drinking so much pop and juice- they are loaded with sugar. Try drinks flavoured with sweeteners instead.

No Smoking!

You don't smoke anyway, right? Let's hope not. Smoking increases your risk of heart attack and stroke (as does diabetes). What else does smoking do? It also increases damage to the blood vessels that feed the brain, heart, eyes, kidneys, and peripheral nerves, speeding up the complications of diabetes. Enough said? Make it your New Years Resolution to quit!

Check your Blood Glucose Levels Often

If you have Type 1 Diabetes, you probably already do this. The target blood glucose level for most patients with diabetes two hours after eating is 5.0 to 10.0 mmol/L. Blood glucose before meals should range from 4.0 to 7.0. Speak to your doctor about what your personal target should be. It

info@neuroconnect.ca

416-882-0233

Visit www.neuroconnect.ca for more resources and information

will be different depending on your age, medical conditions, and if you are pregnant. How do you measure your blood glucose? You will need a blood glucose meter. These are small, portable devices that can be purchased from almost any pharmacy. Ask your pharmacist to show you how to use it properly.

References:

<http://www.diabetes.ca/>

Devore, E. E., Kang, J. H., Okereke, O., Grodstein, F. (2009). Physical Activity Levels and Cognition in Women With Type 2 Diabetes. *Am J Epidemiol* 170: 1040-1047

Saczynski, J. S., Jonsdottir, M. K., Garcia, M. E., Jonsson, P. V., Peila, R., Eiriksdottir, G., Olafsdottir, E., Harris, T. B., Gudnason, V., Launer, L. J. (2008). Cognitive Impairment: An Increasingly Important Complication of Type 2 Diabetes: The Age, Gene/Environment Susceptibility-Reykjavik Study. *Am J Epidemiol* 168: 1132-1139

info@neuroconnect.ca

416-882-0233

Visit www.neuroconnect.ca for more resources and information