

Hospital to hold diabetes clinic

In observance of American Diabetes Month, River Park Hospital's Diabetes Center will hold a free diabetes seminar at McMinnville Civic Center this Monday, Nov. 16, from 11 a.m. to noon. The educational class will focus on diabetes awareness, healthy habits and the effective management of all types of diabetes.

"The statistics are shocking. Diabetes is not just a condition in this country, it's an epidemic disease," says registered dietician Brandy Cox, chief clinical dietician at the diabetes center. "Diabetes can lead to potential life-threatening complications like heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage, blindness and amputation."

The term diabetes refers to a number of diseases, the most common being type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes. In each, the body does not produce or properly use insulin - a hormone needed to convert sugar starches and other food into the energy the body needs to function. According to the American Diabetes Association, 24 million chil-

dren and adults in the U.S. have diabetes and an additional 57 million have pre-diabetes, a condition that increases their risk for developing type 2 diabetes. If the current trends continue, it is projected 1-in-3 children born today will face a future with diabetes.

The exact cause of diabetes is still unclear, although both genetics and environmental or lifestyle factors can play an important role in the development of diabetes and its complications. Many people can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes through healthy lifestyle practices such as changing eating habits, increasing physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight.

"It's not just a matter of staying away from sugar. It's a whole lifestyle," says Cox, "We want to get the word out that it isn't a hard lifestyle to lead, that it just takes a little discipline. The benefits - a longer, healthier life and a reduced risk of diabetes - are worth the effort though."

Having a plan and setting

realistic goals are the first steps to managing diabetes. Small, simple practices such as skipping second helpings, replacing soft drinks with water, participating in a walking program, or scheduling an appointment with a dietician can be the first steps to a healthier life.

"Support is always important and that is what we hope to provide through this class. We hope to raise awareness of the disease, share some facts and provide support for those wanting to make lifestyle changes to prevent or delay diabetes," says Cox.

Attendees to the diabetes class will receive complimentary take-home information on diabetes care and a variety of vendors will be available to answer questions and to provide additional resources on a first-come, first-serve basis. Light refreshments will be available and no RSVP is required. For more information, contact the Diabetes Center at River Park at 815-4553.

