

## **November is Diabetes Awareness Month**

Diabetes is a highly prevalent health condition in the aging population. Over 25% of people over the age of 65 years have diabetes and 50% of older adults have prediabetes. Type 2 diabetes dominates in the older population requiring regular assessment of medical, psychological, functional, and social networks. Screening for diabetes complications should be individualized as there are higher rates of functional disability, accelerated muscle loss, and coexisting illnesses, such as hypertension, chronic kidney disease, coronary heart disease, stroke, and premature death than those without diabetes. At the same time, older adults with diabetes are at greater risk for cognitive impairment, depression, urinary incontinence, injurious falls, persistent pain, frailty as well as polypharmacy. These conditions may impact older adults' diabetes self-management abilities and quality of life if left unaddressed.

Let us take a moment to answer a few questions:

### **What is Diabetes?**

Yes, it is a serious disease. It happens when the body doesn't make enough insulin in the pancreas or can't use it well. Resulting in high levels of glucose (blood sugar) in the blood. As a result, your body doesn't work like it should.

### **What Happens in the Body?**

Food we eat, specifically carbohydrates turn into glucose. Glucose is the main source of energy for our brain, red blood cells and muscles. Glucose must enter our cells so we can use that energy. Glucose needs the help of insulin to do this. Glucose can not enter our cells if the body (specifically the pancreas) doesn't make enough insulin or if our cells can't use the insulin- referred to as insulin resistance.

### **What are the Dangers of High Blood Glucose?**

Elevated blood glucose over time damages all the major organs leading to heart attacks, stroke, kidney issues, vision problems, and neuropathy are only a few complications.

### **What are the Symptoms?**

Symptoms of Type 2 diabetes develop over time. Symptoms to be aware of are feeling thirsty, frequent urination, losing weight without trying, feeling hungry, blurred vision, numbness or tingling in hands and feet, feeling very tired, dry skin, slow wound healing to more infections than usual.

**If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, it is time to follow up with your primary care office.**

## **Do you Have Diabetes?**

### Understanding your fasting blood glucose level is:

Below 100mg/dL= Normal level

100 to 125 mg/dl = Prediabetes

126 mg/dl or higher = Diabetes

### Understanding Hemoglobin A1C levels:

Normal: A1C level is below 5.7%

Prediabetes: A1C level is between 5.7% and 6.4%

Diabetes: A1C level is 6.5% or higher

References: [Hearttruth.gov/whatisdiabetes](http://Hearttruth.gov/whatisdiabetes), [diabetes.org/diabetesstandardofcare](http://diabetes.org/diabetesstandardofcare), [cdc.gov/diabetes/diabetes](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/diabetes)

Written by Laurie Zirilli, registered dietitian, contract RD for Oneida County Office for the Aging. Oneida County OFA provides nutrition counseling and education for the aging. Questions about services and programs for older adults and caregivers, including the Senior Nutrition Program, should call Oneida County Office for the Aging at (315) 798-5456.

## **Chicken Burgers, Serves 4**

### **Ingredients:**

1-pound lean ground chicken

½ cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs

1 egg

½ small onion, finely chopped or 1 teaspoon onion powder

2 gloves garlic, minced or 1 teaspoon garlic powder

2 cups chopped spinach

1 cup red or green peppers chopped

2/3 cup Feta cheese crumbled, or strong cheddar cheese shredded

ground black pepper to taste (eliminated the salt)

2 teaspoons of olive oil for cooking

Mix all the ingredients together. Form 4 burgers. Fry until no longer pink inside- remember the ground chicken cooks must faster than ground beef. Serve on a roll and/or veggies.

### **Nutrition Facts- 1 burger**

Calories 238, Total Fat 8g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 110mg, Sodium 175mg,  
Total Carbohydrate 12g , Protein 29g