world diabetes day
14 November

Welcome to World Diabetes Day, November 14th each year to commemorate Sir Frederick Banting birthday, who co-discovered insulin with Charles Best in 1922. The 2026 theme

"Early action on diabetes"

There are 589 million people living with diabetes worldwide per the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2023, diabetes was the 7th leading cause of death in the US. In the US per last updated report in March 2026, there are 40.1 million people diagnosed and undiagnosed with diabetes. Estimated 12% of US adults have diabetes with 115.2 million with prediabetes. 27.6%, or 11 million US adults are undiagnosed. For our seniors over age 65 there are 31.3 million with prediabetes or 52.1 %. Breakdown by race for both men and women show American Indian or Alaska 12.2%, Black, non-Hispanic 11.8%, Hispanic 9.7%, Asian 7.1% and white, non- Hispanic 7.1%. Leading to the need for early diagnosis and timely care to reduce and prevent complications from diabetes.

Diabetes is a serious disease that affects many older adults. Diabetes a health condition where your body has too much sugar—called glucose—in our blood. How the body normally works is when you eat food, your body turns it specifically the carbohydrates into glucose. This glucose goes into your blood to give your body energy. Our pancreas make a helper chemical called insulin. Insulin acts like a key. It unlocks your body's cells so glucose can leave the blood and go where it is used as fuel for energy. When you have diabetes, this system breaks down because your body either: Does not make insulin (the key) or it cannot use the insulin correctly. When the glucose cannot get into the cells, it piles up in your blood. High blood glucose can cause health problems over time if it is not properly managed.

You can lower your risk of type 2 diabetes by making simple lifestyle changes, such as losing extra weight and staying active per the Mayo Clinic. Losing extra weight, shedding just 5% to 7% of your body weight can significantly reduce your risk of developing diabetes. Get regular exercise, aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity, like brisk walking or cycling, five days a week. Eat a balanced diet focusing on whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and healthy fats while avoiding sugary drinks and processed foods. Drink water instead of sugary beverages as choosing water helps keep your blood sugar stable and cuts out hidden sugars. Quit smoking as it raises insulin resistance and increases your chances of developing type 2 diabetes.

Common early warning signs of diabetes include increased thirst, frequent urination, extreme fatigue, increased hunger, unexplained weight loss, blurry vision, slow healing of cuts, scrapes and bruises, frequent infections to tingling and/or numbness in hands and feet. With these symptoms, follow up with your primary care physician for simple blood testing such as fasting blood glucose and/or A1C. Early diagnosis is very important as too much glucose in the blood has a negative impact on the function of your heart, blood vessels, kidney, vision, nerves in your feet and hands with further damage to liver, gums, bones, depression and cognitive decline.

Both the WHO theme **"early action on diabetes"** and American Diabetes Association (ADA) Campaign theme of **"It All Matters"** focus on early diagnosis, risk reduction, awareness of warning signs to ensure screening and proper medical care.

Holiday Green Beans with Cranberries and Walnuts adapted from ADA

Serves: 4 to 5

- ¾ pound of fresh green beans, trimmed
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1-2 Tbsp walnuts (or your favorite nuts), chopped
- 2 Tbsp dried cranberries
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 1/8 tsp salt (optional)
- Lemon zest from 1 small lemon

In small bowl, combine oil, nuts, cranberries, pepper and optional salt. Top the cooked beans with this mixture. Set aside while cooking the beans. Garnish with lemon zest.

Fill a medium size pot 2/3 full of water and bring to a boil. Add beans, cover, turn off the heat, let the beans cook for 3 minutes. Drain; add to the serving bowl. Toss with the above mixture. Garnish with the lemon zest. Enjoy.

Happy Thanksgiving!!!

References:worlddiabetesday.org/resource-hub/,www.nia.nih.gov/health/diabetes/diabetes-older-people, ncoa.org/article/what-are-10-warning-signs-of-diabetes-in-older-adults,cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index,my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/7104-diabetes,niddk.nih.gov/health-information/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 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.