
Diabetes Screening Urged For All After Age 45



The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has amended its recommendations on screening for diabetes following a review of current best evidence. According to the revised USPSTF guidelines, screening for diabetes and pre-diabetes should now be performed for all adults over at 45. USPSTF also recommends that uniform insurance coverage for such screenings will help families to gain access to services enabling them to live healthy lives.

The USPSTF move immediately earned praise from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest aggregation of food and nutrition professionals. "Given the significant impact of type 2 diabetes on the nation's health and economy, the importance of efforts to reduce the incidence of diabetes has never been greater," said registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy President Sonja Connor.

The amended screening guidelines would enable people to obtain medical guidance they need to prevent or manage diabetes, and lead a healthier life while also saving taxpayer dollars and healthcare spending, Connor continued.

Lifestyle Changes Play a Key Role Preventing or Managing Diabetes

"Lifestyle changes are the most important factor for preventing or managing diabetes," Connor stressed. Eating nutritious food, integrating physical activity into daily routines and losing a modest amount of weight "must be the first method of therapy" for those with prediabetes and diabetes, the nutrition expert pointed out.

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a major multicentre clinical research study, found lifestyle intervention reduced the risk by 50 percent that a person with prediabetes would develop diabetes. At the beginning of the DPP, participants were all overweight and had blood glucose (blood sugar) levels higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes — a condition called prediabetes.

Connor also cited the importance of medical nutrition therapy, or nutrition counselling provided by registered dietitian nutritionists. "(This) has demonstrated effectiveness in terms of patient outcomes and capacity to reduce healthcare spending by preventing chronic disease among patients at highest risk," Connor said.

Medical Nutrition Therapy Included in Amended Screening Guidelines

Medical nutrition therapy provided by RDNs would be included in the healthcare services provided in the amended USPSTF guidelines.

"Both MNT and the Diabetes Prevention Program show great promise for being included as Medicare-covered services for people with prediabetes," Connor said. "Registered dietitian nutritionists are poised to help individuals and families prevent and manage their diabetes thanks to these amended guidelines."

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

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