

# Health e-Newsletter

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**Dear Clients,**

We do hope that you enjoy the November newsletter. Please contact with any questions or comments. Let us know if you have any suggestions on articles for future newsletters.

**Keep your company informed with important health information!**

This newsletter is designed to benefit you and your employees, so please feel free to forward it to family, friends and co-workers!

## November is American Diabetes Month

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors such as obesity and lack of exercise appear to play roles.

There are 23.6 million children and adults in the United States, or 7.8% of the population, who have diabetes. While an estimated 17.9 million have been diagnosed with diabetes, unfortunately, 5.7 million people (nearly one quarter) are unaware that they have the disease.

In order to determine whether or not a patient has pre-diabetes or diabetes, health care providers conduct a Fasting Plasma Glucose Test (FPG) or an Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT). Either test can be used to diagnose pre-diabetes or diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends the FPG because it is easier, faster, and less expensive to perform.

With the FPG test, a fasting blood glucose level between 100 and 125 mg/dl signals pre-diabetes. A person with a fasting blood glucose level of 126 mg/dl or higher has diabetes. In the OGTT test, a person's blood glucose level is measured after a fast and two hours after drinking a glucose-rich beverage. If the two-hour blood glucose level is between 140 and 199 mg/dl, the person tested has pre-diabetes. If the two-hour blood glucose level is at 200 mg/dl or higher, the person tested has diabetes.

## Major Types of Diabetes

## Click here to take a Diabetes Risk Test

To learn about ways Employers can help workers reach their health goals click here



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#### Type 1 Diabetes

Results from the body's failure to produce insulin, the hormone that "unlocks" the cells of the body, allowing glucose to enter and fuel them. It is estimated that 5-10% of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 1 diabetes.

#### Type 2 Diabetes

Results from insulin resistance (a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin), combined with relative insulin deficiency. Most Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 2 diabetes.

#### Gestational Diabetes

Immediately after pregnancy, 5% to 10% of women with gestational diabetes are found to have diabetes, usually, type 2.

#### Pre-Diabetes

Pre-diabetes is a condition that occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. There are 57 million Americans who have pre-diabetes, in addition to the 23.6 million with diabetes.

### Workers Want Employer Help with Health Goals

Employees say they would like to improve their health status but need their employers to help them do it, a survey by the Washington-based National Business Group on Health has found.

However, the demands of work, personal life and overall stress levels are keeping them from pursuing their health improvement goals, said employees responding to the survey. In its survey, the NBGH found that while 88% of employees have taken steps to improve their health within the past year or have been regularly doing so for more than a year, work demands are preventing 47% of them from leading a healthier life. Employees also said they want health care communication targeted to their specific needs and interests, and to learn more about how to save money and get more value from their health plans, the survey found.

When asked to rank their preferred method of communication, 77% of employees said they read health-related e-mails, 65% like getting health mailings, and 55% use their employer's Web site or intranet. While the vast majority said monthly or quarterly communication would be the preferred frequency for health-related communication, younger workers and men said they would like it even more often. Employees are becoming more engaged in making active health care choices during annual enrollment, the survey found. Almost three-quarters (73%) said they reviewed their health plan options for their 2008 annual enrollment and of those, 24% switched to a different plan. The tools employees found most helpful in making their decision were out-of-pocket cost calculators, used by 63%; enrollment guides, used by 61%; and plan comparison tools, used by 60%.

More than half (54%) of employees said they would take advantage of health-related activities if offered by their employer as a way for them to improve their health status, the survey found. Of that group, 59% said they would get on-site health screenings; 55% would use worksite fitness centers; 53% would enroll in a weight management program; 52% would participate in a Web-based wellness program; 52% would see a worksite health care provider; and 49% would work with a health coach. Almost half (48%) of those surveyed said they completed an online health assessment to find out if they had any health risks based on lifestyle or family history. Of those who completed an assessment,

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19% said they did so because it was a requirement to enroll in employer sponsored health care coverage, while 32% did so because their employer provided a financial incentive. After completing an assessment, 51% of employees carefully reviewed the personal report they received, 35% made lifestyle adjustments to minimize the risks identified, and 22% shared the results with their doctor. Of those who not complete an assessment, 48% said it was not offered by their employer, and 34% said they were not aware that online health questionnaires were available to them.

The survey, which was conducted online between July 10 and July 21, 2008, by Fidelity Investments, included responses from 1,502 employees working full or part time at employers with 2,000 or more employees. The survey was funded by the NBGH for its members' exclusive use.

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