



¶ This little pamphlet is the second in the series of "Health Notes," that are sponsored by the Women's Auxiliary of the Jewish General Hospital.

These health notes have been authorized and prepared under the auspices of the Medical Board of the hospital and are written to guide you, in your task of safe-guarding the health of your family and yourself. It is sincerely hoped that you will find them informative and useful.

DIABETES



The normal person is able to utilize sugar and starch in such a way that the sugar in the blood is at a fairly constant and uniform level and no sugar is present in the urine. When the process involved in the normal digestion of sugar and starch is impaired the amount of sugar in the blood rises above normal and in the attempt to rid the blood of this excessive amount, the kidney excretes sugar which now appears in the urine.

When this condition occurs it is known as Diabetes.

Diabetes is very common. It is estimated that one person in every 150 has the disease. This means that in a city the size of Montreal there are between 7,500 and 10,000 people who have diabetes.

There is a strong hereditary tendency, people who have close relatives with the disease are more likely to develop it than those without such a family history. Overeating and overweight are important factors contributing to the development of diabetes.

The disease itself may be very mild or very severe. It may be generally stated that diabetes, when it occurs in children is always a serious illness, in young people a moderately severe illness, and in middle aged and older people, it is usually a mild disease.

Regardless of age, it is important that the disease be recognized early and treatment started in order to delay and possibly prevent complications which can at times prove fatal and very often disabling.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

Symptoms of diabetes usually occur only when the condition has existed for some time, except in children, when they may appear suddenly.

The development of an unusual thirst, frequent passing of urine, increased appetite, loss of weight and strength, itching of the skin, call for immediate investigation. However, because these symptoms develop late, periodic health examination is to be relied upon best and this especially by those who have close relatives with diabetes.

The importance of early recognition lies in the fact that—except in children who always require insulin—early diabetes may very often be adequately controlled by regulation of diet alone and without insulin, whereas if the disease is of long standing, dietary regulation and insulin will nearly always be required. It is important to emphasize that in a fairly large percentage of patients after a shorter or longer time the use of insulin may be discontinued and regulation maintained by diet alone. It is equally important to emphasize that the use of insulin does not allow of full freedom of diet.

Diabetes intelligently treated need not interfere with full enjoyment of life, nor will it shorten life expectancy. Neglected it may result in serious disabling complications.

Diabetes is never curable but always controllable!