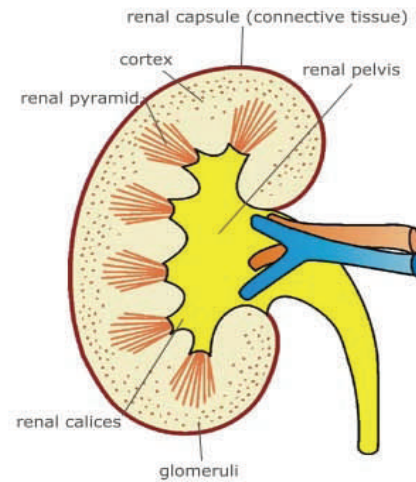
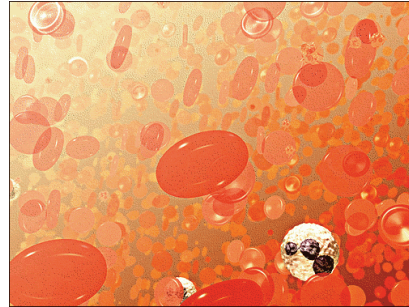


Diabetes and Your Kidneys

By Helen Maldonado, PA-C, CDE



If we eat too much starchy foods like bread, rice, pasta, and potatoes and drink soda or juices with sugar in them, the amount of sugar in our blood increases. Sugar in the blood is carried by our red blood cells. The only way our bodies can move the sugar from the blood to the muscles is to make those muscles work.



Diabetes is the number one reason American Indians and Alaska Natives have problems with their kidneys. Diabetes can also cause other health problems like heart disease, vision loss and numbness in the feet called neuropathy. If you have diabetes, your health care provider will do a number of routine tests to see if you are starting to have any of these problems. If there are early changes in your body, sometimes there are treatments to help but the best thing is **prevention**. That is the reason why at least once a year, sometimes more often, the health care provider will collect a urine or blood sample from you. They are looking for microscopic particles of protein in the urine and blood that occurs when your blood glucose (sugar) is greater than 200 most of the time. This causes blood vessels in your kidneys to become damaged and the kidneys are unable to work correctly.

Normal red blood cells are flexible and stretchy, kind of like a Gummy Bear candy. This is so the cells can float through tiny vessels in our kidneys, eyes and toes. But if there is a large amount of sugar attached to the red blood cells, they become stiff, like a sugar coated gum drop and can become even harder as the amount of sugar increases.



The good news is that these red blood cells live for only about 3 months (new cells are made by your bones constantly), so with practice and help, you can eat and drink differently to decrease the amount of sugar in the blood. You can also start walking short distances to pull that sugar into the muscles where it belongs. If the sugar stays in the blood stream attached to those red blood cells, they act like hard scrapers that damage all of the tiny vessels in your eyes, kidneys and feet.

The kidneys are a blood filtering system and every drop of blood the heart pumps gets filtered through the kidney like going through a million tiny strainers. Since protein particles are larger than other particles, the "strainers" usually don't allow the proteins to come out of the system through urine. If there is damage to the "strainers" (think of big holes in a food strainer) then the protein falls through those holes and comes out into the urine. This is not a good thing as our bodies need protein.

The way to keep your kidneys healthy when you have diabetes is to see your health care provider **often**. Test your blood glucose with your tester (glucometer) 1 to 4 times **every day**. Learn about foods that help your body instead of doing it harm. Try to increase your movement every day, even if it is sitting in a chair and moving your arms if you are unable to walk. If you have questions, call your health program today. California's tribal and urban clinics are very knowledgeable about diabetes care.

Important Events

- **Indian Health Summit (July 7-9)**
Location: Hyatt Regency Hotel, Denver, Colorado — A national gathering of Indian Health Professionals and administrators, community advocates, activists, and Tribal leadership.



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California Area Indian Health Service

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July 2009 Newsletter



Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH



August is National Immunization Awareness Month

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the lifespan, from the very young children to the elderly. This is an appropriate time to remind the members of your communities, including family, friends, and co-workers to catch up on their vaccinations. Parents who enroll their children in school, stu-

dents who are entering college, and health care workers should be encouraged to begin preparation for the upcoming flu season. Communities are encouraged to plan local health screenings or fairs, media events and other related immunization outreach efforts during the month of August to promote the benefits of immunization.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that the single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each fall. Good health habits and antiviral medications are other measures that can help protect against the

flu. Studies show that immunizations are the first line of defense against vaccine preventable diseases and are important for children, adolescents, and adults.

Vaccine-preventable disease rates are lower than they have ever been; however in order to continue this pattern, healthcare providers must educate their patients and provide immunizations as indicated by the recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Because children are vulnerable to infection, most vaccines are given during the first five to six years of life. *(continued on page 3)*

Safety on a Budget

By Steve Lopez, RHIA

In these tough economic times it may seem even more difficult to think about what's necessary to keep your family safe. Here's the good news: **Keeping your children safe doesn't have to be expensive.**

There are plenty of free things you can do and low-cost safety devices that can help make your home safer, without breaking your budget. Consider the following tips to help you get started:

- Keep an eye on your children at all times. This is the best way to keep your child safe, and it doesn't cost a penny!
- Keep poisonous items, such as medications and cleaners, locked away and out of reach of children
- Don't let children play on stairs, furniture, balconies, roofs, or in driveways, streets or parking lots
- Practice an escape plan with your family
- Cook on back burners and keep handles facing away from front of stove so curious children won't pull hot contents down on themselves
- Keep bathroom doors closed with a hook-and-eye latch above a child's reach to keep kids away from hazards in the bathroom
- Tape any loose rugs firmly to the floor/carpet to avoid slips and slides of running toddlers



Keeping your child safe is priceless!

Be Active Your Way By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE

What do physical fitness and sports, high blood pressure education, women's health, employee health, and better sleep all have in common? They all share physical activity as a supporting factor. Being physically active on most days can help maintain a healthy weight, support good eating habits, control stress and blood pressure, and promote better sleep. Being physically fit means being able to function effectively throughout the day, being able to perform your usual activities, and have enough energy left over to handle any extra stress or any emergency that may arise. Physical fitness supports good body composition; too much body fat can reduce sports performance and negatively impact health.

Three key components of physical fitness are:

- Aerobic exercise; helps oxygen & nutrients reach cells and remove waste
- Strength training; helps build and maintain muscles
- Flexibility; includes stretching which helps joints

Simply stated, being active your way means striving to be as active as you can on most days. This is a central piece of balancing life and promoting wellness. The benefits include:

- Weight control.
- Cardiovascular disease risk reduction
- Type 2 diabetes risk reduction
- Risk reduction of some cancers
- Increase bone and muscle strength
- Reduction of daily stress
- Improved mental health and mood
- Ability to do daily activities
- Healthy sleeping patterns
- Increase chances of living longer!



For more information, visit:

Just Move It, <http://www.justmoveit.org>

President's Council of Physical Activity, <http://www.fitness.gov>

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>

What are Dental Sealants? By Steve Riggio, DDS



Dental sealants represent one of the greatest advances of modern dentistry.

Applied during a simple procedure,

dental sealants act as a barrier, protecting the teeth against decay-causing bacteria.

The sealants are usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (premolars and molars) where decay occurs most often. In fact, nearly 84% of all cavities occur in these teeth! These back teeth are prone to cavities because they contain small pits and grooves. Although thorough brushing and flossing help remove food particles and plaque from smooth surfaces of teeth, the toothbrush bristles cannot always reach all the way into these pits and grooves to extract food and plaque. Bacteria builds up in these pits and grooves, feeds on food particles, and creates

acid as by-product of this feeding. It is this bacterially created acid which destroys tooth enamel, causing cavities.

Dental sealants are clear protective coatings which, once applied, cover the tooth surface preventing bacteria and food particles from settling into the pits and grooves. Sealants are easy for your dental professional to apply, and it takes only a few minutes to seal each tooth. The procedure is quick and painless and does not require drilling or removing tooth structure. After the tooth is cleaned, a special gel is placed on the chewing surface for a few seconds. The tooth is then washed off and dried. Then, the sealant is painted on the tooth. The dental professional will shine a light on the tooth to help harden the sealant. It takes about a minute for the sealant to form a protective shield.

As long as the sealant remains intact, the tooth surface will be protected from decay. Sealants hold up well under the force of normal chewing and usually last several years before a re-application is needed. During your regular dental visits, your dentist or dental hygienist will check the condition of the sealants and reapply them when necessary.

Sealants are one part of a child's total preventive dental care. A complete preventive dental program also includes fluoride, twice-daily brushing, wise food choices, and regular dental care.



August is National Immunization Awareness Month *(continued from page 1)*

Other immunizations are recommended during adolescent and adult years, with certain booster vaccinations recommended throughout life.

The following are recommended practices for reducing vaccine-preventable diseases:

- Health care providers should be current on all immunizations and unless contraindicated, receive the influenza vaccine prior to the start of "flu" season
- Health care providers should attend annual training updates regarding immunizations and

vaccine preventable diseases in order to maintain a safe practice

- Patients should be educated by health care providers about vaccine preventable diseases and ways in which these diseases can be prevented
- Health care providers should avoid missed opportunities by providing immunizations to patients who are due for them when the patient arrives at the facility for other health care services
- Health care providers should send out reminder letters to patients who

are due for immunizations and continue to follow up as appropriate

- The use of Immunization Registries for data collection, tracking, and reporting is highly recommended as a measure of assuring immunization coverage

For more information on Immunizations, you may visit the National Partnership for Immunization web site at www.partnersforimmunization.org.

Here you will find resources that promote immunization and NAIM.

Buckle Up! A Seat Belt Can Save Your Life

By David Sprenger, MD



Seat belt use amongst American Indians and Alaska Natives is much lower than in the population of the U.S. as a whole. A study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Bureau of Indian Affairs found that on average, only 69% of tribal members living on a reservation with seat belt laws in effect actually wore them. The rates were much lower on reservations where no seat belt laws were in effect. In the U.S. as a whole, 82% of people wear their seat belts when driving or riding in a car.

The low seat belt usage amongst American Indians and Alaska Natives is one of the reasons that in California, the death rate due to car crashes is highest in the AI/AN population compared to all other races. The simple act of putting on a seatbelt can lower this rate. A study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the use of a lap-shoulder belt can reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a motor vehicle crash by as much as 50%.

In order for seat belts to be effective in preventing injury or death, they must be worn properly. Here are some important tips for proper seat belt use:

- Shoulder belts should be worn over your shoulder, across the center of your chest, and close to your body. They should NEVER be tucked under your shoulder
- Lap belts should fit snugly across your hips, not across your stomach
- One person to a seat belt, NEVER double up!
- Pregnant women should ALWAYS wear seatbelts. The best way to protect your unborn child in a car crash is to properly wear your seat belt
- Children under the age of 6 or less than 60 pounds must be buckled in an approved child safety seat in the back seat of the vehicle
- Inspect seat belts regularly for signs of wear and to make sure the latch is functioning properly

In California, state law requires all drivers and passengers to wear their seat belts. So, before you start the vehicle, make sure you and all your passengers are safely buckled up. In the event of a car crash, this one simple step can be the difference between life and death.