

Preventing Diabetes

by Patricia Nugent

According to the Centers for Disease Control, as of last year 9.3 percent of Americans, or 29.1 million, suffer from diabetes. And that number is projected to nearly double by 2025.

Although this silent killer has no cure, pre-diabetes can be reversed. Pre-diabetes is a condition that occurs when blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

Here in Lake County, there are an estimated 63,000 residents over age 18 who are pre-diabetic. As with most chronic diseases, diabetes is far easier to prevent than it is to treat. And prevention is at the heart of an initiative introduced by the Lake County YMCA: the Diabetes Prevention Program.

Its goal is to help identify individuals with pre-diabetic symptoms and help them make lifestyle changes in diet and activity to avoid the onset of Type 2 diabetes. "This national program, in partnership with the YMCA USA and Centers for Disease Control, is one of 200 in the country," says Margaret Warner, Lake County YMCA Senior Health Living Director. "Our first group of eight people began meeting in August, and they are already seeing positive results."

To qualify for the program, you must be over 18 years of age, have a BMI of 25 or over and have a diagnosis of prediabetes via a blood test



or previous diagnosis of gestational diabetes, she says.

The group meets for an hour in the classroom every week for the first four months, then every other week, then monthly for one year. "As a trained lifestyle coach, my goal is education and fostering group support," she says. "Each week there is a weigh-in, and we go over their physical activity and food trackers." The folks in this initial group range in age from 30 to 65, and come from all walks of life.

The Lake County YMCA encompasses 3 locations throughout the county. The cost of the Diabetes Prevention Program is \$420, which can be covered by insurance or the Lake County YMCA. You do not have to be a member to participate in this program.

Wondering if you are at risk for Type 2 diabetes? Take an easy quiz on the organization's website, LakeCountyYMCA.org, or call 440-352-3303.

