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Contact:

Audrey Graves
Channel Islands YMCA
805.569.1103 x30
Audrey.Graves@ciymca.org

How To Prevent and Reduce the Risk for Diabetes

As diabetes rates continues to rise, few Santa Barbara residents know they are at risk

Santa Barbara, CA – December 4, 2017 – During National Diabetes Awareness Month, the Santa Barbara Family YMCA is encouraging residents of Santa Barbara to learn their risks for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes and to take preventive steps to potentially reduce their chances of developing the disease.

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that more than one in three Americans (84 million people) has prediabetes. Prediabetes is a condition in which a person's blood glucose is elevated, but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis. Only 10 percent of those with prediabetes know they have it but with awareness and simple actions, people with prediabetes may prevent the onset of diabetes.

"As one of the leading community-based charities committed to improving the health of Santa Barbara, the Y wants to all people to understand their risk for prediabetes and steps to take to avoid developing type 2 diabetes," said Margo Byrne, Chief Operations Officer for the Channel Islands YMCA. "Developing type 2 diabetes impacts the lives of millions of people and their families each year physically, emotionally and financially."

Individuals can assess their risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes by taking a simple test at YMCA.net/diabetes. Through this assessment, visitors can also learn how lifestyle choices and family history help determine the ultimate risk for developing the disease. Several factors that could put a person at risk for type 2 diabetes include race, age, weight and activity level. If a person is at risk, a diabetes screening conducted by a physician can confirm a diabetes or prediabetes diagnosis.

The Santa Barbara Family YMCA also offers its members Y Fit appointments, three complimentary one-hour sessions with a Y Fit expert. During these appointments, members can discuss health concerns and develop a fitness plan and solutions with their expert in order to meet their specific needs and goals.

One diabetic Y member details their story of transformation, "Since joining the YMCA, I came in at 230lbs, diabetic, insulin dependent and generally unfit. After 18 months, I have dropped 35lbs, lost 6 inches off my waist. I am now insulin free, and my blood pressure is back to normal. I have been coming seven days a week to workout & swim. It has become a new way of life for me."

Thanks to the Y programs, the people of Santa Barbara are able to improve their health

Making some basic lifestyle changes that contribute to weight loss and healthy living can decrease the risk for type 2 diabetes. Among these are:

- Eat fruits and vegetables every day.
- Choose fish, lean meats and poultry without skin.
- Aim for whole grains with every meal.
- Be moderately active, getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
- Choose water to drink instead of beverages with added sugar.
- Speak to your doctor about your diabetes risk factors, especially if you have a family history or are overweight.

Thanks to charitable donations from the community, the Y can continue to offer health programs to individuals and families in need of financial assistance. To learn more about the Santa Barbara Family YMCA's programs, please contact Mackenzie Hopkins at Mackenzie.Hopkins@ciymca.org or at 805.687.7720 x237.

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About the Channel Islands YMCA

Established in 1887, the Channel Islands YMCA is a charitable organization of seven YMCA branches serving Santa Barbara and Ventura counties including: Camarillo Family YMCA, Lompoc Family YMCA, Montecito Family YMCA, Santa Barbara Family YMCA, Stuart C. Gildred Family YMCA in Santa Ynez, Ventura Family YMCA, and Youth and Family Services YMCA which operates Noah's Anchorage Youth Crisis Shelter, the St. George Family Youth Center and My Home.

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The Channel Islands YMCA serves over 46,000 individuals and provides over \$1.3 million in financial assistance to families in need for child care, YMCA memberships, away and day camps, youth sports, and teen after-school programs. **For more information about the Santa Barbara Family YMCA, visit <http://www.ciymca.org/santabarbara/> or call (805) 687-7727.**