



How Diabetes affects Corporate Employees

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India is experiencing rapid globalization and urbanization because of which incidence of Diabetes and other lifestyle disorders have grown up in the past 2 decades. Recent studies have shown, India is slowly becoming the diabetic capital of the world. With over 41 million Indian diabetics, every 5th diabetic person in the world is Indian. Diabetes and its complications is one of the major causes of morbidity in India with about 2% deaths from diabetes and about 26% deaths from cardiovascular diseases, a major complication of diabetes. The most susceptible are the ones working in the corporate sector. With little or no time for physical activity, excessive amount of stress to meet the deadlines, extended working hours and long hours of seated postures lead to obesity and hypertension in the short term. If unattended, it progresses into a full-fledged case of diabetes or cardiac condition. Most corporates (especially IT and Tech) do have company-wide initiatives to look after the employee well being, but none of them focus on managing the health issues of those employees.

As employees are the key people of an organisation, their health issues should be the focus of every employer. Considering this, various companies have come up with an initiative to address the health concerns of its employees. Common features of such programmes include full body blood check-ups, doctor and diet consultations etc. These help the employees to better manage their sugar levels and decrease the symptoms and complications of diabetes in the long run. The test which can help diagnose diabetes are Glycated hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c), Oral glucose tolerance test, fasting and random blood sugar. Out of these, HbA1c can be done without fasting and tells the average 3 months blood sugar levels in the blood.

Usually corporate employees may not find enough time to look after their health due to meetings and work to take medications or meals on time. This may occasionally lead to low blood glucose level (hypoglycemia) in diabetic employees. This is usually when insulin removes too much glucose from the blood, because of increased medication dosage, excessive physical activity, little food or a missed meal and the effects of drinking alcohol. If an individual experiences sweaty skin, cold, light headedness, dizziness, blurred vision, stomach ache, nausea, irritability etc. then this is an episode of hypoglycemia. It should be treated as soon as possible else the individual could lose consciousness and even die.

If someone is experiencing any of the above symptoms, their blood sugar levels are to be checked immediately through a glucometer. Sugar level less than 70 mg per dL denotes hypoglycemia.

The following fast-acting carbohydrates can be given (15 grams):

- 15 g of glucose in the form of glucose tablets
- 15 mL (3 teaspoons) of sugar dissolved in water
- 175 mL (3/4 cup) of juice or soft drink
- 15 mL (1 tablespoon) of honey

After 15 minutes, blood sugar is to be checked again. This line of treatment is referred to as the Rule of 15. If the level of sugar is still low, then treat again with the above. If the patient is unconscious, then honey or thick sugar water paste can be applied on the roof of the mouth. Individuals with diabetes are advised to wear medical ID bracelets or necklace to provide information to their friends or co-workers and others during emergency or in a state of unconsciousness.

In conclusion, healthy employees build healthy companies. The western lifestyle is taking a toll on everyone. Producing increased numbers of overweight population with lifestyle diseases. Hence a healthy lifestyle must be adopted to combat these diseases and their complications.

You can do everything you can to try to stop bad things from happening to you, but eventually things will happen, so the best prevention is a positive attitude. -Marie Osmond.

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