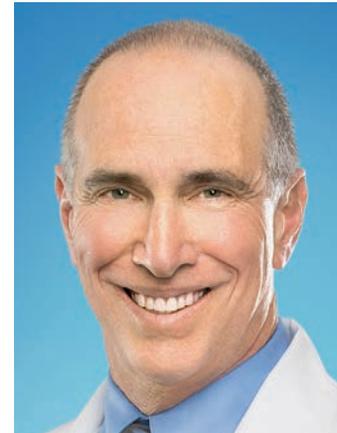


Ask an **EXPERT**

Wayne A. Evron, M.D. on **DIABETES**

ABOUT THE EXPERT: One of Pittsburgh's leading endocrinologists, **Wayne A. Evron, M.D., FAACE**, practices at St. Clair Hospital. Dr. Evron specializes in treating disorders of the body's endocrine system, including diabetes, obesity and thyroid disorders. Dr. Evron is board certified in both internal medicine and endocrinology by the American Board of Medicine. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; he completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Florida-Shands Hospital, plus an internal medicine residency and endocrine and metabolism fellowship at UPMC.



What role does exercise play in the management of diabetes?

Exercise helps to lower blood sugar levels. When we exercise, the body shifts glucose from the bloodstream to the muscles so that they have energy to perform the exercise. Exercise is an essential factor in managing diabetes, in weight loss and in maintaining general good health. If I could convince people to change just one thing, it would be to exercise more – a LOT more. Exercise is the key to health and very few people get enough.

What is the best proven method of weight reduction?

Obesity is a complex, chronic metabolic disease and unfortunately most of the approaches to it are oversimplified. You can't tell people to simply stop eating. There's definitely a genetic component; some of us are programmed from birth to be heavier. Insulin resistance is the key issue – obese people don't respond to insulin as well, and the majority of obese people are insulin-resistant. High insulin levels lead to obesity, high triglyceride levels and high blood pressure. Treating obesity successfully is not easy, but it isn't hopeless.

How does diabetes lead to heart disease?

Diabetics are twice as likely to suffer heart attack or stroke, and the National Institutes of Health reports that about 65% of diabetics will die of a heart attack or stroke. People with diabetes may have multiple risk factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure and obesity. Fortunately, there are effective ways for diabetics to reduce their risk, including control of blood sugar, blood pressure (BP) and cholesterol levels. The HgA1c test, which provides an aver-

age of your blood sugars over the preceding 2 to 3 months, should be less than 7% for most diabetics. A goal BP for most diabetics is less than 130/80. There are medications to help people meet their BP and cholesterol targets. Additional measures include smoking cessation and weight loss. Lifestyle modifications make a big impact: try to get 30-60 minutes of daily exercise and follow a diet that is low in saturated fats and salt.

What is the best way to prevent complications?

The best thing we can do is control blood sugars. It's important not only to achieve a hemoglobin A1c between 6.5 -7% but recent data also seems to show that the two-hour post-meal blood sugar is correlated better to vascular complications than simply the fasting blood sugar. A goal of less than 160 mg/dL is an excellent benchmark.

Will diabetes ever be cured?

Although diabetes remains challenging for both physicians and patients, medical advances have improved longevity and quality of life for diabetics. People can live healthy lives with diabetes, and some of my patients say that being diagnosed with it taught them about healthy eating and taking better care of themselves. I have patients who have lived well with diabetes for 50 years.

What is a good resource for learning more about diabetes?

The American Diabetes Association website has excellent information and educational materials. **ST. CLAIR HOSPITAL'S DIABETES CENTER** offers excellent classes and individual instruction; to learn more, call **412 942-2151**.

To make an appointment, contact **Dr. Evron's** office at **(412) 942-7295**.