

The Link Between Diabetes and Mental Illness

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ARE YOUR MEDICATIONS INCREASING YOUR RISK OF DIABETES AND ITS COMPLICATIONS?

Currently, it is believed that up to 3 million Canadians have diabetes, and this number is on the increase. However, up to half of the total cases of diabetes - about 1.5 million - remain undiagnosed. Diabetes is an insidious, or silent, disease which can occur in just about anyone because of a variety of factors. Because it is so serious and common, and yet so poorly detected, diabetes has been identified as a major public health issue.

What you should know about diabetes.

Why is it important for you to know about diabetes? If you have been diagnosed with a mental health problem (for example,

schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression), you may be more prone to developing diabetes than someone without these conditions. The reasons for this are complex and not yet well understood. In addition, some medications used to treat mental illnesses may cause weight gain that, in some patients, can lead to diabetes.

What is diabetes? Diabetes can be defined very simply as a condition where the body's insulin does not properly control the levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. In its early stages, most people with diabetes do not notice any symptoms. Only a doctor can make an accurate diagnosis; this is done by measuring your blood sugar levels at various times.

If diabetes is not detected and treated properly, it can lead to blindness, heart and kidney disease, nerve damage, circulatory, and various other problems. That is why it is important to diagnose and control diabetes as early as possible. Following your doctor's advice may help to prevent it altogether.

