

Diabetes Can Knock You Off Your Feet

by Dr. Eunice Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH Clinic Administrator, Foot Center of New York



Diabetes. Everyone knows someone who is diabetic or pre-diabetic; hopefully, those folks see their doctors regularly and have adjusted their lifestyles accordingly. Thirteen

percent of residents of East Harlem and 12 percent of residents of Central Harlem have diabetes, compared to the Manhattan average of seven percent. And among New York City residents with diabetes, more than one-third have not gotten an eye or foot exam in the past year (2005).

This last statistic is especially troubling. Although diabetes affects one's total well-being, one of the more serious aspects of the disease is the threat it poses to the

foot. Why? Nerve damage (neuropathy), common in diabetes, causes decreased sensation, or total lack of feeling, in the lower leg and in the foot. A diabetic might not be aware of a pebble in a shoe, something sharp on the floor, or anything else that might scratch or cut the skin on the foot. That can open it to infection, which can have dire consequences, including amputation.

In addition to neuropathy, there are two additional foot and

lower extremity problems that are complications of diabetes: poor circulation (aka peripheral vascular disease), and foot ulcers and infection. Diabetics' poor circulation leads to the possibility of infections and complications, while foot ulcers (open sores on the foot) are subject to infection (gangrene) that may result in surgery, with amputation of the diseased portion.

Some tips for care of the diabetic foot include avoiding walking bare-

foot, extremes of temperature, including heat from heating pads, hot foot soaks or hot water bottles, or cold, which could lead to frostbite; inspecting feet and shoes daily; going to a podiatrist for treatment of corns and calluses and other foot problems; and drying feet thoroughly and using a moisturizing cream daily.

Do you think you might have diabetes? Nearly half of those who have diabetes are unaware they have it.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, a good time to know the symptoms: frequent urination; extreme hunger and thirst; weight loss; weakness and fatigue; blurred vision; pain, tingling or numbness in fingers, toes or limbs; slow healing of skin. If you have some or all of these symptoms, please see a doctor for an exam without delay.

Visit the Foot Center of New York at 55 East 124th Street or call 212-410-8158 for an appointment.

52 CAN DO'S:

How I made my pain, my progress – and the power of sweet beet greens

By Monifa Maat "The Healthy Motivator"

Early one morning I woke up, ran a few errands, then headed toward my local farmer's market that I frequent every Friday –they've got the freshest corn, kale, tomatoes, peppers, apples, and more that I just can't always get at the supermarket.

When I got home, I was ready to whip up some savory kale greens with olive oil and garlic. I searched my bags –no kale. I stopped at several locations during my errands "darn it!" I must have left that big bag of fresh kale at the very crowded farmers market.

Before frustration could set in, I paused, realizing there



were beautiful bright leafy greens poking out of the bag from the beets I just brought from the market. I must have

confused them with the kale bag thinking I'd picked them both up.

I cut off the green and red leaves from my beets, washed and cut them into small strips, then sautéed them with red onion, fresh garlic, red pepper flakes, a small cap full of apple cider vinegar, dash of salt and a touch raw organic honey to taste -- basically preparing them as I would have the kale. Hands down the best greens I've probably eaten all year.

They were absolutely so delicious I forgot all about the kale. Plus, the greens of the beets are the most nutrient dense and full of iron –al-

most 15% of the daily recommended value. I felt so proud of myself that I was able to take something I would normally toss in the garbage and make it into a star dish. After all, didn't our African ancestors given leftovers from the plantation (turnip, collard, kale greens, ham hocks etc.) have to make something great from all that they had to provide for their families? Adam Clayton Powell asked "what's in your hands?"

Like a car, my mind switched gears—wait a minute...if simple beet greens could make me feel such a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment –what else am

I overlooking that if I just used what was in my hands, I could make into something amazing if I put my mind to it?

You've heard it a million times –and it's true. When life throws you lemons, make lemonade by asking yourself, "What makes me feel happy, joyful, inspired?" and simply use what you have to make something better!

It's incredible, the power of those greens –sweet beet greens. Who knew?

Next week...

Healthy Habit #2: Daily Fitness at your Finger Tips... fitness solutions that are quick, easy and made for everyone!