

# Technology & Information

## Incidence of Diabetes in Older Adults on Rise

The incidence of newly diagnosed diabetes among older adults increased by 23% from 1994 to 2003, according to a report in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. In 1994, 33,164 Medicare patients were diagnosed with diabetes, whereas in 2003 that number reached 40,058. For the full report, see <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/168/2/192>.

## Geriatric Diabetes Care Guidelines

Should the same goals for blood glucose control to manage type 2 diabetes apply to elderly and younger patients? Under general-population guidelines, 35% of “frail” older patients met their target goals for glucose and blood pressure control; under stratified guidelines, 70% did. Researchers who compared new diabetic treatment guidelines for the general population with stratified guideline goals for older adults believe stringent guidelines are not appropriate for all elderly patients and should be stratified based on physician-assessed life-expectancy, age, and comorbidity scores. They call for less stringent care goals in patients with lower life expectancy. More information is available at: <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=15321>.

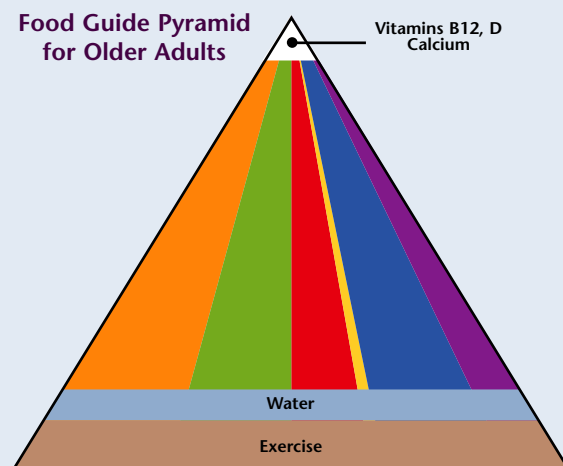
## Pre-Diabetes Screening in Older Adults Is Cost Effective

According to a study in the November issue of *Diabetes Care*, screening overweight and obese adults (ages 45-74) for signs of pre-diabetes and treating them using Diabetes Prevention Program lifestyle interventions, will improve quality

of life and be cost effective. The cost-effectiveness ratio for screening and treating those with impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose is \$8181 to \$9511 per quality-adjusted life year. The article can be accessed at <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/30/11/2874>.

## Updates to Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults

Tufts University researchers have updated their Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults to correspond with the USDA food pyramid, now known as MyPyramid. The Tufts version, called Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults, is specifically designed for older adults and emphasizes nutrient-dense food choices and the importance of fluid balance. It also has added additional guidance about forms of foods that could best meet the unique needs of older adults and emphasizes the importance of regular physical activity. More information can be found in the January 2008 issue of *The Journal of Nutrition* at: <http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/abstract/138/1/5>.



## Read Up on Diabetes Preventive Services Covered by Medicare

Learn more about Medicare’s coverage of diabetes screening tests, supplies, and other services

for beneficiaries with diabetes, including coding, billing, and reimbursement details, through these resources:

- *The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals* [www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps\\_guide\\_web-061305.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf)
- *Diabetes-Related Services* brochure [www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/DiabetesSvcs.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/DiabetesSvcs.pdf)
- National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) <http://ndep.nih.gov/>
- Educational literature for beneficiaries [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

## CKD and Part D Prescription Drug Benefits

The National Kidney Foundation provides a patient education brochure about medications for chronic kidney disease and coverage under Medicare Part D prescription plans. The brochure can be downloaded by physicians or patients from [www.kidneydrugcoverage.org/pdf/CKD\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.kidneydrugcoverage.org/pdf/CKD_booklet.pdf). Help keep your patients informed by providing copies of the brochure or giving them the Web site address.

## Mental Health Treatment Effective in Seniors with Diabetes and Depression

Management of depression in seniors with diabetes and depression can decrease the likelihood of death by half, according to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine who used data from the Prevention of Suicide in Primary Care Elderly: Collaborative Trial (PROSPECT) to draw their conclusions. Read the full report at: <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/30/12/3005>.

## Quality Reporting Software for EHRs

A new tool that automates quality reporting requirements of federal pay-for-performance programs and provides real-time clinical decision-support information for patient care has been announced by Allscripts. The system works to automate the

process of qualifying for PQRI and other pay-for-performance bonuses by extracting and compiling the appropriate quality measures from the electronic health record (EHR), practice management system, or outside laboratories.

## Medco Launches Medicare Part D Initiative to Promote ePrescribing

Medco Health Solutions, Inc. has announced the launch of a national initiative to assist physicians of Medicare Part D patients switch from handwritten to electronically generated prescriptions. The pilot program, which will include 500 physicians who are currently treating enrollees in the Medco Medicare Prescription Plan™ program, will also study the impact on the Medicare population of ePrescribing on patient safety, increased generic drug use, and formulary compliance on the Medicare population. Medco is working with RxNT, a provider of ePrescribing technology and will provide the pilot program physicians with free RxNT ePrescribing software and training. Over a 6-month period, the physicians' rate of generic drug dispensing, formulary compliance, and generated safety alerts will be compared to a control group of 500 doctors who did not receive ePrescribing software or training. Ultimately, 2000 doctors, primarily general practitioners and internists, will participate in the ePrescribing program. For more information, see: <http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=131268&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1107171&highlight=>

## Ongoing Exercise Important for Preserving Function in 70-89 Year Olds

Elderly adults (ages 70 to 89) who were at risk for physical disabilities showed their gumption by sticking to an exercise program of up to 150 minutes or more per week for 1 year as part of the Lifestyle Intervention and Independence for Elders Pilot (Life-P). The study was sponsored by the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (USDA HNRCA) at Tufts University. Prior to study entry, the participants were sedentary with health problems ranging from cardiovascular disease to osteoporosis, and physical limitations that included difficulty walking or climbing stairs. After following a moderate exercise program that included walking, strength, flexi-

bility, and balance training, physical function improved for these study participants who were supervised at university centers or at home during the first 6 months of the study. To read more, see: [www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ\\_NO\\_115=206308](http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ_NO_115=206308).

## Never Too Late to Jump on the Exercise Bandwagon

Those 65 and older can reap significant health benefits and reduce risk for obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis by adopting simple and realistic lifestyle changes, according to a study by a New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center physician-scientist. The study (available at: [www.ajcn.org/cgi/content/abstract/86/5/1572S](http://www.ajcn.org/cgi/content/abstract/86/5/1572S)) reviewed the literature for research data that applied commonsense lifestyle changes to people over 65 years—the data show that it's not too late to make changes for better health:

- Blood pressure lowering through diet and exercise had more dramatic health benefits for elderly adults than for any other age group.
- A low-calorie diet with regular exercise reduced the rates of cancer up to 50%.
- Weight training increased older adults' ability to burn calories and prevent osteoporosis.
- Calcium and vitamin D supplements helped slow rates of bone loss and reduce the number of bone fractures.

## Testing Device DETECTs Signs of Early Alzheimer's

A testing device, called DETECT, developed at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University, may allow physicians to check for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), often the earliest stage of Alzheimer's during yearly physical exams. The 10-minute test gauges reaction time and memory—two functions that, when impaired, are associated with early Alzheimer's. Preliminary analysis of the first 100 patients in a 400-person clinical study at Emory's Wesley Woods Center has shown that DETECT has similar accuracy to the 90-minute "Gold Standard" pen and paper test. For more information, see: [www.gatech.edu/newsroom/release.html?id=1674](http://www.gatech.edu/newsroom/release.html?id=1674). MPM

---