

Script – Print - Dealing with Diabetes

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center recognized as a leader in the fight

It's a growing concern for the state of America's overall health. Nearly ten percent of Americans have diabetes and one-and-half million more of us are diagnosed with it every year.

Those statistics come from the American Diabetes Association, or ADA. And apparently, they also believe OSF Medical Group - Endocrinology and Diabetes knows a thing or two about the disease as well. The ADA recently recertified the hospital's endocrinology and diabetes center. It's because we exceed standards in diabetes education, self-management, skill and training for patients.

"We're going to help them not only get their blood sugars controlled, we want to see improved A1C's," says Priscilla Babler, Registered Dietician and Certified Diabetes Educator for OSF Medical Group. "We want to see that quality of life for them."

However, it's more than just telling patients what to do. Babler says it's very hands-on with both classroom and individual instruction that includes assisting their understanding and use of new technologies to monitor and control their diabetes.

"For eligible patients we have what's called continuous glucose monitoring - or we'll shorten that and just say CGM," says Priscilla Babler, Registered Dietician and Certified Diabetes Educator for OSF Medical Group. "I've got a couple of examples right here. We have one device where the actual sensor is worn in the abdomen and all of the sugar, or glucose readings get collected in the transmitter and they get sent to a receiver or even to a smart phone. And people can be using that to see what their blood sugar is or their sugar reading right at that moment. Then, we also have another CGM that is actually worn on the back of the arm and then a person would simply wave the reader across that and they would also be getting a reading."

While diabetes can affect all ages, it's prevalence among seniors is high - more than 25 percent according to the ADA. Equally concerning for Babler are the number of those over 65 not taking advantage of the government-sponsored support available to assist them in dealing with their diabetes.

"Less than five percent of Medicare patients are actually using their Medicare benefit for this diabetes self-management education and support," says Priscilla Babler, Registered Dietician and Certified Diabetes Educator for OSF Medical Group. "So, that would be something we'd sure like to help people know that have a benefit and we can help them."

Babler also is concerned that with a growing number of patients being diagnosed with diabetes, there are a lot people who may not know they have the disease. She advises being tested.

To learn more about the OSF endocrinology and diabetes centers, visit www.osfhealthcare.org. Those in the Rockford region can call 815-381-7790.