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## INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REGARDING DIABETES

The number of children with Type 2 diabetes is increasing. The good news is there are things that you and your family can do to greatly decrease the chances of getting this disease. This information sheet is provided to give you information about Type 2 diabetes. Contact your health care provider if you have further questions or are concerned about your child being at risk for this disease.

*This type 2 diabetes information is being provided to your seventh grade student pursuant to California Education Code Section 49452.7.*

### Description

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in adults.

- ✓ Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes was rare in children, but it is becoming more common, especially for overweight teens. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- ✓ The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- ✓ The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- ✓ In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose (sugar) levels rise.
- ✓ Over time, glucose (sugar) reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia (high sugar level in the blood).
- ✓ Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

### Risk Factors Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

It is recommended that students displaying or possibly experiencing the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes be screened (tested) for the disease.

Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:

- ✓ **Being overweight.** The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
- ✓ **Family history of diabetes.** Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
- ✓ **Inactivity.** Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.

- ✓ **Specific racial/ethnic groups.** Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
- ✓ **Puberty.** Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children. This is probably due to normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance.

### **Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes**

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- ✓ Increased hunger, even after eating
- ✓ Unexplained weight loss
- ✓ Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- ✓ Feeling very tired
- ✓ Blurred vision
- ✓ Slow healing of sores or cuts
- ✓ Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- ✓ Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- ✓ High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

### **Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Methods and Treatments**

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels.

- ✓ **Eat healthy foods.** Make wise food choices. Eat foods low in fat and calories.
- ✓ **Get more physical activity.** Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- ✓ **Take medication.** If diet and exercise are not enough to control the disease, it may be necessary to treat type 2 diabetes with medication.

The first step in treating type 2 diabetes is to visit a doctor. A doctor can determine if a child is overweight based on the child's age, weight, and height. A doctor can also request tests of a child's blood glucose to see if the child has diabetes or pre-diabetes (a condition which may lead to type 2 diabetes).