

*The Dakota Diabetes Coalition is proud to offer a regular column on diabetes and related concerns every other Friday.*



Dr. Eric L. Johnson is a family practice doctor in Grand Forks with a special interest in diabetes -- and a special knack for writing. As a member of the Dakota Diabetes Coalition, he has generously made himself available to answer questions through our listserv. If you have comments, or questions for Dr. Johnson to address in future columns, please contact

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<http://www.ndhealth.gov/diabetescoalition/>

**Fertility implications**

## **Lifestyle beats drugs for pre-diabetes**

**Q.** I had a question about someone with elevated blood sugars. I am thinking of an otherwise healthy female patient whose fasting blood sugars are elevated but not to the roughly 126 level.

She is overweight and fairly sedentary. Would you start her on Metformin to prevent onset of diabetes? One of my colleagues had suggested doing this, but I am very hesitant that once this medication is started, it will not be withdrawn. Her A1C is 5.8. Please let me know if you have any suggestions -- other than weight loss!

Thank you.

**A.** I'd be happy to help you with this. Currently, the American Diabetes Association Guideline recommends lifestyle measures for diabetes prevention in the pre-diabetic patient. This would include a consult with a dietician. Metformin can be considered, but is not yet part of ADA's official recommendation.

This is primarily based on the Diabetes Prevention trial of 2002, published in New England Journal of Medicine, which showed lifestyle

intervention to be superior to metformin in the prevention of diabetes in pre-diabetes patients.

Pre-diabetes patients should continue to have their blood sugars checked in the office every six months. Screening for a diagnosis of diabetes using the A1C is not currently recommended by the ADA. The value of the A1c is strictly for monitoring patients who have a known diagnosis of diabetes.

It's important to note that in a pre-diabetic female, if you give her metformin, this may enhance her fertility. Many of these women have impaired fertility from polycystic ovary syndrome, and so they may have been lax about birth control.

There are still ongoing studies looking at various medications in the prevention of type 2 diabetes. I'd expect a lot more on this over the next one to two years.

Let me know if you need additional information or have other questions.

--- [Starting Metformin in Pre-diabetes, Dr. Johnson's Column #23, May 30, 2008](#) ---