

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness Program, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I'm Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Kayla Wagner. She's one of the diabetes educators at Lake Region Healthcare joining us during November, diabetes awareness month. Good morning Kayla.

Kayla Wagner: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: So, as I mentioned, November is diabetes awareness month and we have a special event coming up this week in the clinic that we want to let our listeners know about. But I also want to take this program as an opportunity to provide a little education to our listeners about diabetes in general as well. I think first we should start out by talking about you. What makes you an expert on this topic? What's your role here, and what does that entail?

Kayla Wagner: Well, my title is Certified Diabetes Educator, but I'm also a registered dietitian. I don't know if I'd say I'm an absolute expert, but I do have some special education in that, and I've been doing this role for about five years now at Lake Region. It's really something I'm passionate about, and I want to help patients who have diabetes, to know about diabetes.

Katie Johnson: So for listeners who are maybe not familiar with diabetes, let's start with the basics. How would you describe this disease?

Kayla Wagner: Well, diabetes is a disease in which the glucose or the sugar in your blood is elevated. The problem is that if we leave that glucose elevated for a long period of time when we start to develop other chronic complications, such as heart disease, or kidney disease or some kind of nerve damage and we're really concerned about that.

Katie Johnson: So how can somebody know if they're at risk for diabetes?

Kayla Wagner: Well, there's a lot of different things that can put us at risk for diabetes, and certainly our lifestyle, our hereditary factors. But there is a diabetes risk assessment test that's available through the American Diabetes Association, and you can find that on their website or simply by googling "diabetes risk assessment test" and you'll see that pop up. It's a series of just a few questions, and you can kind of score yourself and see if you are at high risk for diabetes.

Katie Johnson: So, if that's the case and someone does show up as being high risk, what's the next step they should take?

Kayla Wagner: Definitely talk to your doctor about it. Get some other testing done, some more confirmation kind of testing and just go from there. See if you need to do any kind of lifestyle changes, or if you're at that point of other types of intervention, they'll help you guide through that.

Katie Johnson: So speaking of that, someone with diabetes who might need some interventions, how do they get connected with someone like you, with a diabetes educator, and what does that process look like?

Kayla Wagner: So the first step would be talk to your primary care provider if you can, call into the office or if you have an appointment, great. Just bring it up to them. You do need a referral to come and see us. So just ask them if you can have that referral. If you're unsure of what to do, you can certainly call the Diabetes education Office, and we can help you with that process and figure out what to do there.

Katie Johnson: And you mentioned an office, you're not the only a diabetes educator here. Tell us what the team looks like, and maybe even include that phone number of how people can reach you guys?

Kayla Wagner: Yes. Well first of all, I'll say our office number, which would be, 739-6648. We are there everyday of the week, eight hours a day. Of course we go home on the weekends though. So our other diabetes educators would be Julie [Hammering 00:03:27] who also a Registered Dietician and a Certified Diabetes Educator. She's been here working with me since I started. Then also we have a new educator who is Madison [Meshek 00:03:37] and she's fresh out of college. She's also a Registered Dietician and she's working on becoming a Certified Diabetes Educator, but it does take quite a bit of time. So she'll be working on it for a while.

Katie Johnson: She's been on our show too. She's already brought us some great knowledge of what she's been learning in the course of her internship, and now working here. You said you've been doing this for five years, what would you say is the most rewarding aspect of diabetes education, in particular?

Kayla Wagner: Definitely when we get to see those patients succeed. Not everybody who comes into the office is maybe real thrilled about being there right away. They're not sure what to expect. But when you see the complete flip side in the end, after they've been in there a few times and they've gotten their blood sugar to come down or that A1C, which everyone with diabetes knows what that A1C is. But when you really get to see them set a goal for themselves, and succeed and accomplish that, that's really rewarding for me.

Katie Johnson: What are some of the things that you do to help someone? I'm envisioning that it's a lot of teamwork and setting up a plan, and understanding each individual to help them set goals that are really meaningful to them?

Kayla Wagner: Right. Yeah. It's really, like you said, very individualized, and we just want to help you set goals and succeed with them. Whether that be you want to be able to move more, or whether or not you want to lose some weight, or whatever it is, we just want to help you reach that goal. If it's something you're having difficulty with, testing your blood sugar, you're not sure what kind of

medications you're on or what they do, all that stuff. We can just help you with ... myself in particular, I'm really interested in diabetes technology. I work with people with insulin pumps, or continuous glucose monitors or help people who want to use those. So, that's also really useful for certain people with diabetes.

Katie Johnson: So you mentioned those glucometers. That brings me to my next question, which is about this special event on Thursday. Tell us what you've got planned, and I know those are part of it.

Kayla Wagner: Yes. So on Thursday our plan is that we'll have one of our diabetes educators available in the lobby in the clinic, and we have a whole bunch of glucometers that we just want to give away to the people who may be in need of them. So if you're someone who you think should be testing your blood sugar, or maybe you've gotten away from it, they'll be available in there for free, for you to have; as well as if you need a little bit of a quick education, a rundown on how to use them, we can provide that as well.

Katie Johnson: Tell us about the hours, and what other kinds of things you're going to be offering. When we talk about diabetes awareness and prevention, I think maybe one of the misconceptions is that it is preventable.

Kayla Wagner: Right. We will have somebody there from about 9:00 to 4:00, and we'll also have a diabetes risk assessment tool that I mentioned earlier. If anybody's interested to stop by and grab one and just see if you are someone that's at a particular concern for diabetes at this point, that'd be great. Definitely diabetes is something that is preventable if you're not quite at that point. Maybe your blood sugar is just a little bit elevated. There's lifestyle changes, there's things you can do, and knowledge is power.

So, if you come in and get a glucometer, if you're not quite at that point of feeling comfortable going into the provider and really getting tested, or you're not sure; this is something that you could just do a test at home, and monitor for a short period of time and see where you're at.

Katie Johnson: This will be a great opportunity to have just firsthand access to you as diabetes educators and registered dietitians, just free, no risk, kind of a low pressure environment all day Thursday, as you said, in the clinic lobby. Obviously this is open to everyone, and you've got some specific things for specific groups of people. But any one in particular you really want to say, "These are the people who should show up on Thursday."

Kayla Wagner: Well, definitely I would say anybody who feels that they are at risk, and like I said, you just want to be able to check yourself to see if you're really at that point to talk to your doctor. Also anybody who currently has diabetes, and maybe you feel you've gotten a little off track. Maybe you haven't been testing your blood sugar, or you don't know where your glucometer is anymore and

you're ready to take that first step to getting back on track, which I think would be to start monitoring your blood sugar again.

Katie Johnson: Well, it sounds great. I'm so glad that you all are taking the time to set aside Thursday, before we wrap up November, National Diabetes Awareness Month. To provide this access to our community to your knowledge, to these great tools and this great information. Anything else you'd like to share with us about diabetes, your diabetes prevention education program or Thursdays event?

Kayla Wagner: Just come on out if this is something that interests you, and definitely take advantage of our diabetes education program that's here. Not everybody knows it's available, and we're just here to help you. We're here to be that support. So, give us a call.

Katie Johnson: And that phone number again?

Kayla Wagner: 739-6648.

Katie Johnson: Great. Kayla Wagner, diabetes educator at Lake Region Healthcare; my guest today on Apple a Day, inviting everyone to the lake region healthcare clinic lobby at 111 West Vernon this Thursday from 9:00 to 4:00. The diabetes educators will be there again, those free glucometers and all kinds of great information, risk assessment test and more. We hope to see you at the clinic on Thursday. Kayla, thanks for taking time to be with us today.

Kayla Wagner: Yes. Thank you for having me, Katie.

Katie Johnson: Kayla Wagner, my guest today on Apple a Day. Kayla and Katie reminding you, there is so much to do here ... stay healthy for it. Have a great day.