



Diabetes Support Group at AMH Offers Motivation and Insight

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Whether you're newly diagnosed or have had diabetes for several years, it helps to talk with others in your same situation. The diabetes support group at Alton Memorial Hospital is an ideal place to meet other people with diabetes, gain new insight and find a shoulder to lean on when you need it.

"The support group is a place to find support and learn about how to manage diabetes, but I also try to motivate our group members," says certified diabetes educator Lisa James, RN, BSN, and director of the Diabetes Management Center at Alton Memorial. "Any chronic disease can wear on you, but you have to learn to deal with it. The hardest part for some people with diabetes is staying motivated to keep the disease under good control."

While the support group offers a forum to exchange tips between group members, each meeting also covers a specific topic and often features a guest speaker. Discussions have included the latest information of carb counting, exercise, controlling stress, sleep apnea and much more.

James emphasizes the three key factors in controlling diabetes -- diet, exercise and medications. She has even given the group pedometers to encourage them to start walking regularly. Her goal is to focus on the positive things group members can do to better manage diabetes. James also offers blood glucose meters at the meetings.

The support group has made an impact.

"One man in our group has had diabetes for 10 to 15 years," James says. "He started working hard at exercise and has lost 30 pounds. This has enabled him to reduce his insulin. He has such a positive attitude that it spreads to the rest of the group. When I see people getting good results and better managing their diabetes because of this support group, it makes my job so satisfying."

The group welcomes adults at all stages of diabetes. It meets the third Thursday of every month from 1 to 2 p.m. in the diabetes class room, room G-252 on the ground floor of the AMH Olin Wing. Walk-ins are welcome. For more information about the support group, please call Lisa James at 618-463-7526.



Lisa James talks with participants in her monthly Diabetes Support Group at Alton Memorial Hospital.