

Walking to a healthier lifestyle

With physical inactivity being one of the main reasons for the epidemic growth of diabetes the World Diabetes Foundation in collaboration with Novo Nordisk has initiated the first Global Diabetes Walk on the occasion of the 13th World Diabetes Day 14 November 2004. The aim is to raise awareness of diabetes and to encourage people to take more exercise. The walk is furthermore an attempt to break the current world record for the greatest number of people simultaneously participating in a walk.

The increase of diabetes is largely due to a trend towards less healthy lifestyles occurring in both developed and developing countries. A trend led by urbanisation and economic growth again leading to more people eating unhealthy diets and undertaking less physically demanding work and more passive leisure pursuits. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately 2 million deaths worldwide are annually attributable to physical inactivity with diabetes being but one of the serious secondary complications.

Spending less energy than we consume

The dramatic reduction in our levels of activity is part of the explanation for higher obesity rates across the world. With more than 1 billion overweight adults worldwide and at least 300 million of them being obese obesity is in fact a threat to global health. Being overweight or obese increases the risk for chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and leading health experts and organisations have recognised that physical activity as disease prevention is as important as smoking cessation, healthy diet and cholesterol lowering. According to health experts 30 minutes of “brisk walking” five days a week is enough to change the unhealthy trend and fight world obesity.

Hence this year's World Diabetes Day organised by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) concentrates on obesity under the theme: "Fight Obesity Prevent Diabetes". And by initiating the Global Diabetes Walk the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) and Novo Nordisk hope to promote this message throughout the world and instigate people to actively join the fight against diabetes.

The Global Diabetes Walk is for everyone and reaches across borders, time zones, cultures and organisations. At 10.00 GMT on Sunday 14 November 2004 people from all over the world will begin their 30 minute walk whether as part of a large public walk arranged by one of the partnering organisations or as part of a small privately arranged walk. Walks have been arranged all over the world with the local diabetes organisations as the main organisers. In order to attract as many people as possible a great deal of creativity has been added to many of the arranged walks.

In San Francisco a moonlight walk around the Bay of San Francisco has been arranged to overcome the local time zone and in Athens a walk has been arranged to take place around the Acropolis. In Buenos Aires more than 10.000 people will join the Global Diabetes Walk and support the message of a healthier lifestyle. And in Spain where 21 walks have been arranged the local diabetes organisation will send out 8 million sms messages as a reminder of the Global Diabetes Walk and a final urge to get people out and walking.

Breaking a record

With people participating from 49 countries the Global Diabetes Walk is the largest event of its scale ever attempted. To break the current world record for the greatest number of people simultaneously participating in a walk more than 77,500 people must join the Global Diabetes Walk. The current record as the World's Largest Walk is held by The New Paper Big Walk 2000. On 21 May 2000 77,500 people turned up at the National Stadium in Singapore.

Depending on the feedback WDF and Novo Nordisk A/S aim to make the Global Diabetes Walk a recurrent event with still more people participating each year.

Facts on the Global Diabetes Walk

- Global Diabetes Walk is arranged by World Diabetes Foundation and Novo Nordisk A/S
- At www.globalwalk.info you can find information about Global Diabetes Walk
- You can register for a walk or set up your own walk in an area near you at www.globalwalk.info
- There is no minimum requirements to the number of participants
- All walks have to take place at 10.00 GMT on 14 November 2004
- To break the world record a minimum of 77,500 people must have joined the Global Diabetes Walk



WORLD **DIABETES** FOUNDATION

Lottenborgvej 24 , DK-2800 Kgs. Lyngby , Denmark
Phone +45 44 42 74 38, Fax +45 44 44 47 52