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'Weigh it up': the benefits of seeing your GP National Diabetes Awareness Week 10-16 July, 2011

General practitioner and Chair of the Australian General Practice Network [AGPN], Dr Emil Djakic says patients who suspect they may be 'candidates' for type 2 diabetes should weigh up the benefits of seeing their local family doctor.

During National Diabetes Awareness Week, AGPN is reminding the community to be aware of the signs and symptoms for Type 2 diabetes before it's too late.

Symptoms to look out for may include:

- excessive thirst and urination
- fatigue
- irritability
- blurred vision
- tingling or numbness in the feet

"GPs can inform patients about how to reduce their risk of developing diabetes as well as diagnosing and treating the condition," Dr Djakic said.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- family history
- high blood pressure
- abnormal cholesterol excess weight

"Genetics also plays a significant part in type 2 diabetes particularly with people from Asia, the Pacific Islands, Middle East and Europe," Dr Djakic said.

"Complications from type 2 diabetes can impact on the heart, kidneys, eyes, nervous system and circulation yet type 2 diabetes remains one of the most preventable chronic diseases," he said.

"This condition is commonly related to lifestyle factors, thereby your local general practice is a good start to seek advice about diet, exercise and other risk factors.

"Managing type 2 diabetes will increasingly become a 'team effort' as Australia's new system for primary health care through Medicare Locals, works towards delivering the right care, at the right place, at the right time. It's a system of care that's better designed to help manage patients with chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes.

"Chronic diseases and lifestyle diseases like type 2 diabetes will increasingly be managed in integrated community settings around the general practice sector.

"With GPs at the core of care planning through Medicare Locals, patients with chronic diseases will increasingly manage their conditions with lifestyle modification programs that are monitored and adjusted to achieve better health outcomes for patients and their families," Dr Djakic said.

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