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What's on your plate for World Diabetes Day?

280 Australians develop diabetes every day – the vast majority of them develop type 2 diabetes. Up to 70 per cent of all type 2 diabetes cases could be prevented. Living a healthy and active life is the key to combat the type 2 diabetes epidemic.

Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett says that the magnitude of this epidemic is enormous: “The global burden of diagnosed diabetes has reached epic proportions, putting healthcare budgets around the world under stress.”

Many people don't realise that type 2 diabetes doesn't just affect older people or those who are overweight. “Type 2 diabetes can affect anyone,” Mr Bennett says. “It is a serious and complex condition – and many people underestimate their own risk of developing type 2 diabetes.”

Next to exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet is the key element to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Eating a balanced mix of leafy vegetables, fresh fruit, whole grains, lean meat and fish, unsweetened yogurt and nuts can help reduce a person's risk of type 2 diabetes and reduce complications in people with diabetes.

French-born chef and Diabetes Victoria Food Ambassador Gabriel Gaté is a firm believer that delicious food can be healthy as well. “I encourage everyone to learn to cook well and eat a healthy diet to improve their health. Australians should eat more fish and vegetables to improve their chances,” the author of numerous cook books says.

Recent Roy Morgan research suggests that this message is increasingly heard by people living with type 2 diabetes. Asked about their diet, they reported to have consumed more fresh fruit and fish in any given seven-day period, as well as more fresh vegetables, compared to the average Australian. People with type 2 diabetes also displayed a greater tendency to agree that ‘a low-fat diet is a way of life for me’ and were less likely to visit fast-food restaurants in an average three months.

We are what we eat, yet changing food habits can be a tricky task. Funded by the Victorian Government and managed by Diabetes Victoria, the *Life!* program is designed to provide help. Run by expert health professionals, the program provides the motivation and support needed to make and maintain positive changes to adopt healthy behaviours and a more active lifestyle.

On the *Life!* program website, there is a test to learn more about somebody's individual risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the next five years. For more information and to check your risk: lifeprogram.org.au

We support, empower and campaign for all Victorians affected by diabetes.

For more information:

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