?Medway woman backs new Diabetes UK education campaign

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A local woman is backing a new national campaign highlighting the importance of diabetes education.

Diabetes UK's new Taking Control campaign highlights the huge difference diabetes education courses can make. These courses can help people with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes take better control of their condition, giving them the best possible chance of living long and healthy lives.

Karen Sheppard (53) is the secretary of the Medway Diabetes UK group and was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 1992. She attended 'The Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating" course (DAFNE) which is for people with Type 1 diabetes to learn how to estimate the carbohydrates in each meal and inject the right dose of insulin, so they can fit diabetes into their own lifestyle.

She said: "I was about 14 years before I went on the DAFNE education programme and learnt so much....feel more confident and able to deal with my own diabetes control and things have been better for me ever since. I would advise everyone living with diabetes to go on an education course after all we are in charge of our own health and this is the best tool to allow you to take control."

Jill Steaton, Diabetes UK South East Regional Manager at Diabetes UK, said: "Those who have just been diagnosed with diabetes or who have been living with the condition for some time, can find it difficult to get their heads around how to successfully manage the condition. But by attending a diabetes education course, they can instead feel empowered to take control and manage their condition with confidence.

"There is strong evidence that when people with diabetes are equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage their condition effectively, they can improve their quality of life. They can also reduce their risk of developing avoidable complications, such as kidney disease, stroke and amputation. These are not only personally devastating, but also expensive to treat. Diabetes costs the NHS nearly £10 billion a year, 80 per cent of which is spent on managing avoidable complications. But by giving people the knowledge and skills to manage their diabetes effectively, we can reduce their long-term risk of complications and reduce the cost burden on the NHS.

"We have launched our Taking Control campaign to highlight the importance of good quality diabetes education. We want to encourage everyone in Medway who is living with diabetes to go and ask their healthcare professional for information about a diabetes education course. The campaign also calls on the NHS to make sure that everyone with diabetes has access to the education and support they need to manage their diabetes well. Everyone with diabetes should have access to education from the moment of diagnosis and then throughout their lives."

There are more than 15,700 of people living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes in Medway.

Join the conversation on Twitter by using the hashtag #TakingControl.

To find out more about going on an education course, speak to your GP or healthcare professional. To find out more about the Taking Control campaign and to take action to ensure everyone with diabetes has access to diabetes education, visit www.diabetes.org.uk/taking-control

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