

## AROUND OSCEOLA

### Prevention is key when living with diabetes

More than 100 million U.S. adults live with diabetes or prediabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Many of them manage this disease through physical activity, diet, and insulin and other medications to control blood sugar levels.

Although these measures can help patients maintain a high quality of life, it's important to stay vigilant about the risks associated with this disease. Diabetes is much more serious than simply "high blood sugar," and its complications are much further-reaching.

As a general surgeon at Poinciana Medical Center, I see many patients who need surgery because of diabetic complications. In fact, more than 90 percent of my inpatient wound consultations are related to diabetes.

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions I oftentimes receive regarding surgical complications as a result of diabetes:

#### What is diabetes?

There are two main types of diabetes, both of which affect the body's levels of insulin, a hormone produced in the pancreas that regulates our blood sugar.

In Type 1, which usually (but not always) presents in childhood, the body does not make enough insulin. In Type 2, the body has developed a resistance to insulin. For both, the classic symptoms include increased thirst, a frequent need to urinate, fatigue, blurred vision, and tingling or pain in the hands, feet and/or legs.



Dr. Owen Kieran

#### What are the long-term effects of diabetes?

Because diabetes affects blood vessels and nerves, it can impact almost every organ system in the body.

The longer the disease goes untreated, the more serious the damage. Common complications include vision loss, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and nerve damage, or neuropathy.

Many diabetic patients suffer from foot disorders caused by nerve and vascular damage. They are also more prone to developing cellulitis, a bacterial condition of the skin and tissues beneath the skin, which can worsen into an abscess or a life-threatening tissue infection. Diabetes can also trigger bone infections, which are difficult to treat and can require amputation of the bone.

Not only are these conditions dangerous on their own, but many also require surgery, which brings added risk for diabetic patients. High blood sugar increases inflammation, decreases wound healing and provides a richer environment for germs to grow.

#### How can patients manage diabetes?

Prevention is key to controlling diabetes and avoiding complications. Patients can maintain their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels through a healthy diet, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and regular exercise.

Regular evaluations by a primary care provider and specialists can identify early problems with simple solutions — and often prevent the need for surgical intervention. Keeping diabetic complications at bay can be challenging, but it is possible with a commitment to

See **Diabetes**, Page 12.

## DIABETES

Continued from Page 11

health and the guidance of medical experts.

Dr. Owen Kieran is a board-certified general surgeon at Poinciana Medical Center who practices

at the hospital's affiliated practice, Medical Specialty Group at Poinciana. Medical Specialty Group at Poinciana is located adjacent to Poinciana Medical Center in the Medical Arts

building. To learn more about Dr. Kieran, or to schedule an appointment, search "Kieran" on PoincianaMedicalCenter.com's "Find a Doctor" page or call 888-253-8117.