

endo CHRONICLE



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What is the Endocrine System, Exactly?

In this issue of our quarterly bulletin we hope to shed some light on the complex yet important endocrine system, and educate our patient community about the treatment and prevention of diabetes, endocrine and metabolism disorders. Few people really understand how the endocrine system works and what an important role the endocrine system and hormones play in our lives.

Several body systems are connected with the endocrine system, including the thyroid, metabolism, and the reproductive system.

The endocrine system is a complex network of glands that includes the thyroid, parathyroid, pancreas,

ovaries, testes, adrenal, pituitary and hypothalamus. These glands produce the hormones that control your reproduction, metabolism, and development—as well as your mood, energy, mental abilities and response to your environment. Thus, conditions affecting the endocrine system often involve a complex set of connections in your body, and can have wide-ranging effects on your health and wellbeing. Treatment of endocrine diseases typically requires a special understanding of the complex nature of the hormones involved in the endocrine system, to “get the balance right.”

The endocrine system involves over 100 hormones that maintain and regulate

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Endocrine System

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activities in the body. Most endocrine disorders are caused by a heightened or diminished level of particular hormones.

How is an Endocrinologist Different from a Regular Physician?

Because the diagnosis and management of endocrine disorders is multifaceted, a physician will often refer an individual to an endocrinologist, a highly trained specialist whose area of expertise is in understanding the way this group of glands works. Due to the vastness of the endocrine system's components, endocrinology itself encompasses many areas of specialty.

"Hormone imbalance" may not sound like a condition worthy of serious study and treatment, but when you consider all of the activities in your body that are regulated by hormones, you'll see how much responsibility the endocrine system carries! Hormones play a part in all of these areas of a person's health:

- diabetes
- thyroid diseases
- metabolic disorders
- over or under production of hormones
- menopause
- osteoporosis
- hypertension
- cholesterol (lipid) disorders
- infertility
- lack of growth (short stature)
- cancers of the endocrine glands

The word "hormone" comes from the Greek word *hormao*, meaning "I excite or arouse." This is exactly how hormones work—their job is to evoke a specific response in other cells of the body which are located far away. A single hormone may affect more than one function, and each function may be controlled by a number of hormones.

Nutrition and proper care are essential to maintaining a healthy endocrine system. As endocrinologists, we place a great deal of value on the health and quality of life in our community. As much as 10% of the population will experience some endocrine disorder in their lifetime. Thyroid glands, adrenal glands, nutrition and reproductive health all play a fundamental role in an individual's wellbeing. A healthy and balanced endocrine system means that you can enjoy the exciting and active lifestyle that Utah affords its residents.



Bone Density Tests When should you get one?

Over the centuries, we've come a long way in medical technology, yet we are still using the oldest form of medical imaging – the x-ray – and of course through time it has evolved with us. Today, we have an enhanced form of x-ray technology to measure bone loss called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA), also known as densitometry or more commonly as a bone density scan.

DXA is the standard for measuring bone mineral density (BMD) and is typically performed on the lower spine and hips, though the entire body may be scanned in some instances.

DXA Uses

The most common use of DXA is diagnosing osteoporosis, tracking the effects of its treatment, and predicting the risk of broken bones. Osteoporosis is caused by inadequate calcium intake, making bones brittle, thinner, and easy to break, and is most commonly found in post-menopausal women but may also be found in men.

Do I need bone density testing?

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends that all women over the age of 65 get a bone density test. That doesn't mean you're safe until then—there are several factors to consider when determining the need for DXA testing. Some characteristics include:

- Post-menopausal woman, not taking estrogen
- Personal or maternal history of hip fracture or smoking
- Medicine use that causes bone loss (corticosteroids, thyroid replacement drugs, etc.)
- Type 1 diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease
- Family history of osteoporosis
- And many more...

Visit the [National Osteoporosis Foundation's website](#) for more information.



Utah Endocrinology Associates, the most advanced endocrine clinic in Utah, is now offering one visit appointments for most endocrine testing!

Available tests:

- Bone Density Scan (DXA)
- Total Body Composition (Fat and Lean Body Mass Measurement)
- High-Resolution Thyroid Ultrasound

The test results can be reviewed by Dr. Alireza Falahati with or without an endocrine consultation, as requested by a referring provider.

Dr. Zirkle's Diabetic Care Advice



Dr. Toby A. Zirkle, MD

Family Medicine/Diabetes Specialist

Diabetic Foot Care

Foot problems commonly develop in people with diabetes and can quickly become serious. In fact, the incidence of limb-threatening ulcerations in diabetics is very high, affecting 1 in 6 of our diabetic patients. Non-healing diabetic ulcers are the second leading cause of leg, foot and toe amputations in the U.S. after trauma injuries.

Ulcerations do not occur spontaneously. They are always preceded by gradual or sudden injury to the skin by some external factor, so prevention is key. With summer upon us, foot care is more important than ever, as summer is especially hard on feet.

- With damage to the nervous system, a person with diabetes may not be able to feel his or her feet properly. Normal sweat and oil production that lubricates the skin of the feet is often impaired. This can lead to abnormal pressure on the feet during walking and sores can develop. It is imperative that you check your feet daily for red spots and open sores. If something doesn't seem right, take immediate action and call our office. When in doubt, check it out.
- Summer is often an active time. Activity is good. Activity in bad shoes – especially if you are diabetic – is not good. Avoid open-toed sandals and flip flops. These types of shoes provide little protection and often cause blisters and calluses.
- Use a sunscreen of at least 15 SPF on your feet. Protect feet from the sun – they can burn too. Sunburn can cause blisters, which in turn can lead to complications. Damage to blood vessels and impairment of the immune system from diabetes makes it difficult to heal wounds. Bacterial infection to the skin, connective tissues, muscles and bones can follow.

We invite you to schedule an appointment with us to review good foot care. We cannot over emphasize the importance of preventative foot care for our patients with diabetes. Being able to recognize problems early and seek the right treatment is paramount. Although treatment for diabetic foot problems has dramatically improved over the years, prevention – which includes good control of blood sugar levels – remains the best way to prevent diabetic complications.

DIABETES BY THE NUMBERS

23.6 23.6 million people in the U.S. (or 7.8% of the population) is estimated to have diabetes.

From 2005 to 2007, the diagnosed cases of diabetes increased by 13.5%.

174 The total economic cost or diabetes per year in the U.S. alone is \$174 billion.

33 33% of all adults with diabetes suffer from periodontal (gum) disease.

In 2002, there were 224,092 deaths reported in the U.S. in which diabetes was the direct cause.

75 75% of all diabetics have high blood pressure.

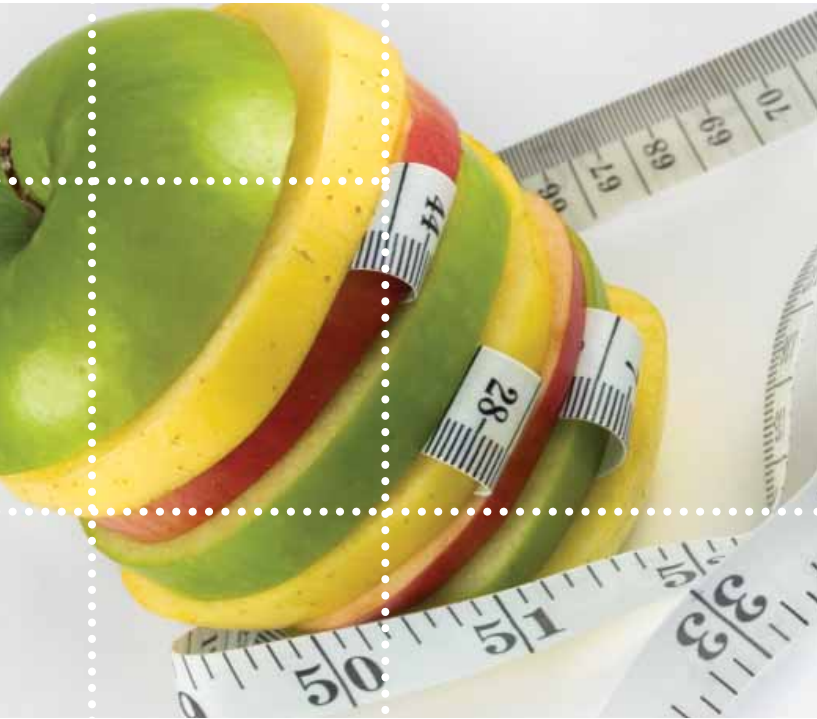
Adults with diabetes have a 2-4% higher chance of contracting heart disease or suffering a stroke than adults without diabetes.

20-74 Uncontrolled diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults age 20-74.



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Welcome!

Utah Endocrinology Associates is pleased to announce the addition of Toby Zirkle, M.D. Dr. Zirkle is a Family Practice Physician who has special interest and expertise in diabetes management. He received his medical degree from Indiana University Medical School in 2005 and moved to Utah, where he completed his Family Medicine residency at St. Mark's Hospital in 2008. Dr. Zirkle's passion for medicine is preceded only by his passion for life.



Dr. Toby Zirkle is currently accepting appointments for new patients. Appointments can be scheduled by calling the offices of Utah Endocrinology Associates at 801.747.2800.

Managing Your Weight

Maintaining your weight at a healthful level is one of the most important ways to feel great and protect your health. No single factor has as much impact on the progression of chronic diseases as being overweight.

To manage your weight, you need to balance the amount of food you eat with the energy you expend. If you consume more calories than you burn, you will gain weight. Get to know your own unique metabolic tempo.

Here are two measurements that you should know:

Waist to Hip Ratio

Measure your waist at its narrowest point and your hips at their widest point. Divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement. You are at increased risk of chronic illness if your

waist-to-hip ratio is greater than 0.80 if you are a woman and 0.95 if you are a man.

Body Mass Index

Divide your weight in pounds by 2.2. Multiply your height in inches by .0254 and then multiply this number by itself. Divide your converted weight by your converted height. A body mass index between 19 and 25 falls within a healthy range.

If you fall within a high risk range, take action and do it now. A discussion of your weight at your next appointment would be a wonderful way to start off the New Year. We can make suggestions and offer encouragement, as well as give you the green light to increase your physical activity. Taking control of your weight is an enormous step towards good health.

Our practice grows by referrals from our loyal patients. Thank you for referring your friends and family.