November is National Diabetes Awareness Month

What do celebrity chef Paula Deen, game show host Drew Carey and tennis legend Billie Jean King have in common? Other than being famous, they all have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. One in 12 Americans has diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. That's more than 25 million people. What's more, another 79 million U.S. adults are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The Mayo Clinic lists these risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes:

- **Family history.** Having either a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- **Age.** Being older than 45. Your risk increases with age
- **Race.** Certain races such as blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Asian-Americans are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than whites
- **Prediabetes.** Having blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not in the diabetes range
- **Weight.** If you’re overweight, you have more fatty tissue which can lead cells to resist insulin. Even so, you don’t have to be overweight to develop type 2 diabetes
- **Fat distribution.** Carrying your “fat” in your abdomen instead of your hips and thighs
- **Inactivity.** Being inactive makes it harder to manage your weight and use up blood glucose as energy
- **Gestational diabetes.** Developing gestational diabetes when you were pregnant or giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- **Polycystic ovary syndrome.**

To prevent type 2 diabetes, early treatment can return blood glucose levels to the normal range, according to the American Diabetes Association. Research shows you can lower the risk for type 2 diabetes by 58 percent if you:

- Lose 7 percent of your body weight – or 15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds. Losing even 10 to 15 pounds can make a huge difference.
- Exercise moderately (such as brisk walking) 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

*Information provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota*