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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Are You At Risk?

AMERICAN DIABETES ALERT IS MARCH 22

The American Diabetes Alert is a call-to-action held on the fourth Tuesday of March (this year, that date is March 22) for people to find out if they are at risk for diabetes.

What is diabetes? Diabetes means that your blood glucose (sugar) is too high (or sometimes, too low). Your blood always has some glucose in it because the body needs it for energy. Too much or too little glucose in the blood is not good for your health.

Could you have diabetes? Diabetes is a silent disease. You could have it for years and never know it. During this time, your eyes, nerves, and kidneys may have been harmed by too much sugar in your blood.

Who is at risk for diabetes? Your risk for diabetes increases as you get older, gain too much weight, or if you don't stay active. It's important for everyone to know the risk factors for this disease. Diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Because of the obesity epidemic that currently plagues our society, more youth are now at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.

Some risk factors for diabetes include:

- High blood pressure;
- Family history of diabetes; and
- Having diabetes during pregnancy or having a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth.

Don't wait for the signs. Most people with diabetes do not notice any symptoms. However, you should call your health care provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: extreme thirst, frequent urination, or losing an unusual amount of weight without trying.

What can you do? You can do things now to lower your risk for diabetes by keeping your weight in control; eating low fat meals that are high in fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods; and staying active.

Learn more. If you or the people you care about are at risk for diabetes, you should learn more and get involved. Contact the Pinellas County Health Department or your regular healthcare provider to find out about your risk for diabetes. Share this information with family, friends and neighbors. Help find the five million Americans with undiagnosed diabetes.

For more information, visit www.diabetes.org, www.pinellashealth.com, or www.pinellaswellness.com

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.