



## **Tell Me About Diabetes** **Whitney Young, ND**

One of the most important things for Canadians to realize is that they could have diabetes and not even know it. Type 2 diabetes is often called adult-onset diabetes and can develop slowly in adults. When you eat the sugars from foods like breads and pastas your body makes insulin to bring the sugar into your cells. The pancreas produces this insulin. In type 2 diabetics either their pancreas is not producing enough insulin or their bodies are not using the insulin properly.

In Canada over 2 million people have diabetes and it is expected that the number will reach 3 million by 2010. This is because the population is aging, obesity rates are rising, and people lead less active and more sedentary lifestyles. It has also been found that diabetes rates are higher in Aboriginal populations and new Canadians.

The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends that all people over age 40 be tested for diabetes every 3 years. Just being over 40 is a risk factor. Other risk factors include high cholesterol, larger abdominal waist circumference, and high blood pressure. If left untreated or not managed properly, diabetes can result in heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease, problems with erections (impotence) and nerve damage. It is recommended that blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels all be tested regularly.

Important ways to reduce your risk of diabetes are the cornerstones of naturopathic medicine: diet and lifestyle modifications. Following a healthy eating plan is essential along with regular exercise. Excess weight increases your risk of developing diabetes so it is imperative to maintain a healthy weight and lose excess weight. Naturopathic doctors can help with dietary counseling and weight loss motivation. They also offer treatments through supplements and herbs that will reduce your risks of developing diabetes.