

LOVE CANAL MEDICAL FUND

A Common Love Canal Medical Disorder: Diabetes

In reviewing the claims from beneficiaries to the Love Canal Medical Fund, one medical problem that was frequently submitted was Diabetes. This issue of the Love Canal Medical Fund Bulletin discusses the coverage for this condition.

Medical Coverage for Diabetes by the Love Canal Medical Fund

Diabetes is a health problem that may be related to exposure to Love Canal chemicals. Therefore, all diagnostic tests and medical treatments for diabetes are covered by the Medical Fund. Many of the medical problems related to diabetes, such as circulatory problems and blindness, are also covered.

It is not completely understood how chemicals may cause such a medical condition. However, there have been studies that have linked exposure to chemicals to the on-set of diabetes.

For example, Agent Orange was sprayed in the jungles in Viet Nam to kill grasses, shrubs and trees. Dioxin, which is found in Agent Orange is believed to be the compound that caused many of the resulting health consequences, including diabetes, that the military personnel suffered.

What Is Diabetes?

Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ that lies near the stomach, makes a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our body. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should.

Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, a variety of eye problems, kidney failure and lower-extremity amputations. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

What Are The Symptoms Of Diabetes?

The following are some of the symptoms of diabetes. If you or someone in your family is experiencing some of these symptoms, they should see a doctor. The Love Canal Medical Fund will cover a beneficiary's diagnostic tests to determine whether or not he or she has diabetes.

Symptoms include:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme hunger
- Sudden vision changes
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Feeling very tired much of the time
- Very dry skin
- Sores that are slow to heal
- More infections than usual.

What Are The Types of Diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes—previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or juvenile-onset diabetes. Type 1 diabetes may account for 5% to 10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

The lack of insulin production by the pancreas may make Type 1 diabetes particularly difficult to control. Treatment requires a strict regimen that typically includes a carefully calculated diet, planned physical activity, home blood glucose testing several times a day, and multiple daily insulin injections.

Type 2 diabetes—previously called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes. Type 2 diabetes account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. This type of diabetes was found in military personnel who were exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. Treatment of Type 2 diabetes typically includes diet control, exercise, home blood glucose testing, and in some cases, pills or insulin injections.

Complications of Diabetes

Eye Disease: Each year 12,000 to 24,000 people lose their sight because of diabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of new blindness in people 20-74 years of age. Types of eye disease includes retinopathy, (damaged blood vessels in the retina), cataracts (the clouding of the eye's lens causing vision to become blurry), and glaucoma, where there is increased fluid pressure inside the eye that leads to optic nerve damage and loss of vision.

Kidney Disease: Ten to 21% of all people with diabetes develop kidney disease. Diabetic nephropathy is the most common cause of end-stage renal disease, a condition where the patient requires dialysis or a kidney transplant in order to live.

Heart Disease and Stroke. Diabetes carries an increased risk for heart attack, stroke, and complications related to poor circulation. People with diabetes are 2 to 4 times more likely to have heart disease (there are more than 77,000 deaths due to heart disease annually). Heart disease death rates are 2 to 4 times higher in adults with diabetes. And, people with diabetes are 2 to 4 times more likely to suffer a stroke.

Nerve Disease, Circulation Problems and Amputations. About 60-70% of people with diabetes have mild to severe forms of diabetic nerve damage and many have problems which circulation as well. Smoking is also an important factor in heart disease and stroke. If you smoke and have diabetes you should make a special effort to quit smoking.

These problems may lead to lower limb amputations. In fact, diabetes is the most frequent cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations. The risk of a leg amputation is 15-40 times greater for a person with diabetes. Each year, 56,200 people lose their foot or leg to diabetes. Smoking also increases this risk.

Impotence: Impotence afflicts approximately 13% of men who have Type 1 diabetes and 8% of men who have Type 2 diabetes. It has been reported that men with diabetes, over the age of 50, have impotence rates as high as 50-60%. Impotence is due to diabetic neuropathy or blood vessel blockage.

Coverage: The Love Canal Medical Fund will cover most of these complications of diabetes. If you are a beneficiary and have diabetes or any of the related complications, you should submit a claim for your out-of-pocket expenses.

Love Canal Medical Fund Contact Information:

If you have any questions about diabetes or whether your illness is covered by the fund, please let us know.

Our e-mail address is lcmf@adelphia.net and our phone number is 716-773-6578. Please, leave a message and we'll make sure that your call receives a quick response.

Our website is www.lcmf.org

You can write us at Love Canal Medical Fund, P.O. Box 540, Grand Island, NY 14072

Love Canal Medical Fund
P.O. Box 540
Grand Island, NY
14072

NON PROFIT ORG
US. POSTAGE PAID
GRAND ISLAND
NEW YORK
PERMIT # 540

Return
Services Requested