

# For Your BENEFIT

STATE OF LOUISIANA • OFFICE OF GROUP BENEFITS • PPO, EPO, MCO, HMO



## Lighten Up Louisiana: From the Big Easy to the Big Healthy

In an effort to jump start Louisiana's efforts to eat better and exercise, Governor Kathleen Blanco and a host of dignitaries, including OGB Chief Executive Officer Kip Wall, formally kicked off "Lighten Up Louisiana" on August 30 at Baton Rouge Beach.

"The difference between try and triumph is 'oomph,'" Blanco said. "And, we're here today to put a little oomph in Louisiana."

The "Subway Twins" Herman and Sherman Smith, who lost more than 200 pounds between them on a 2,000 calorie diet and now represent the Subway Restaurant Chain, also addressed the health conscious crowd.



*Governor Blanco visits with team members of the OGB Brigade at the Lighten Up Louisiana kickoff.*

Lighten Up Louisiana is a new wellness program that encourages Louisianians to increase physical fitness, improve their eating habits and lose weight by participating in a statewide competition. OGB is an official sponsor of the five-month competition and, as part of the opening ceremonies, Wall announced that he was going to "walk the walk and talk the talk." He backed his claim by weighing in and announcing his weight at the kickoff event, as well as at an OGB staff meeting earlier that morning.

Former LSU basketball star Durand "Rudy" Macklin explained how Lighten Up Louisiana works. Teams made up of between two and 10 participants can enter into either the combined weight loss or activity categories or both. The top 10 teams achieving the highest percentage of weight lost and most

accumulated miles will win an invitation to a special ceremony at the governor's mansion and prizes that are still being determined, according to

Macklin. Each participant also receives a pedometer to track activity and each team captain receives a tee shirt.

Macklin said his goal was to change Louisiana's image from the "Big Easy" to the "Big Healthy."

Blanco and Louisiana Health and Hospitals Secretary Fred Cerise demonstrated their commitment to the program by riding up to the event on bikes.

Each of the speakers cited staggering statistics that portray Louisiana as the most overweight state in the country with over 60 percent of our adult residents considered to be overweight or obese.

"We're here today to challenge Louisiana's citizens to get healthier. We know we've got a great state and great food, but that doesn't necessarily make us healthy," Blanco said.

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# From the CEO

## Losing To Win

By A. Kip Wall, OGB Chief Executive Officer

During the next few months, I plan on being a loser. And, I'd like you to join me. The more we lose, the more Louisiana wins.

The Office of Group Benefits, along with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, is a proud sponsor of Lighten Up Louisiana, a five-month competition that runs through January 31st. I encourage you to participate in this program by forming or joining a team of two to 10 people.

Today you can begin your journey to a healthier lifestyle through diet and exercise. Your colleagues at OGB have formed 20 teams of 169 employees and family members, and we challenge you and your agency to do the same.

I am taking the challenge one step further. I have pledged to be weighed in public every Monday and to track my weight loss and physical activity during the entire program. Don't worry. You don't have to make your weight or activity public!

### Why should you get involved?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women. Former President Clinton's recent surgery is a reminder of the risks we all face. With a proper diet and exercise we can reduce the incidence of heart disease.

Another major issue that must be addressed is the fact that people do not take their prescribed medications. Hypertension (high blood pressure) is a silent killer. People feel okay and do not take their blood pressure or cholesterol medications. At the same time, irreversible damage is being done to their heart and

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circulatory systems. TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED BY YOUR DOCTOR.

It's no secret that more than half of Louisiana adults are overweight, which can lead to many chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and heart problems. It's also no secret that chronic illness leads to higher health care costs.

Lighten Up Louisiana is completely free and is open to everyone. All participants will receive a pedometer at the beginning and a t-shirt and certificate upon completion of the program. The top 10 teams will be officially recognized at a special reception held at the governor's mansion.

### How do you get started?

It's really easy. Here's all you have to do:

- Put together a team of two to 10 people from co-workers, friends or family.
- Select a team name and captain.
- Register on-line at [www.lightenuplouisiana.org](http://www.lightenuplouisiana.org) or use the link on OGB's Web site at [www.groupbenefits.org](http://www.groupbenefits.org). You can also call 1-800-352-6491 to get a packet and mail it back to:

Lighten Up Louisiana  
Office of Public Health  
325 Loyola Avenue, Room 315  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Team captains will receive a confirmation e-mail after their registration forms are received. Captains will also get a handbook full of information about reporting progress and will receive additional nutrition and exercise tips.

This is a win-win opportunity for all of us. You and I will win by getting healthier. Louisiana wins by helping to control health care costs.

I challenge you to go the distance and win by losing.



Kip Wall  
weighs-in at OGB.

# HealthTalk



## What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disorder of metabolism – the way our bodies use digested food for growth and energy. It is a common, serious, costly and lifelong condition that poses a major public health problem.

An estimated 18.2 million people in the United States – 6.3 percent of the population – have the disease. Of those, about 5.2 million people have not yet been diagnosed. Each year, about 1.3 million people age 20 or older are diagnosed with diabetes.

At 42.2 per 100,000 population, Louisiana ranks sixth in the nation for diabetes death rates. The national rate was 25.2.

There are three main types of diabetes.

### Type 1 Diabetes

The pancreas (a gland behind the stomach) makes little or no insulin. Insulin acts like a key to help cells use blood sugar.

People with Type 1 diabetes need daily insulin shots – along with proper diet and exercise – to stay healthy.

### Type 2 Diabetes

The pancreas makes some insulin, but either it is not enough or the cells do not use it correctly.

Many people with Type 2 diabetes can control their blood sugar with proper diet and exercise. Others will need insulin and/or diabetic pills, along with proper diet and exercise.

### Gestational Diabetes

Gestational Diabetes develops only during pregnancy. Like Type 2 Diabetes, it occurs more often in African Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans and among women with a family history of diabetes.

## Should I Be Tested for Diabetes?

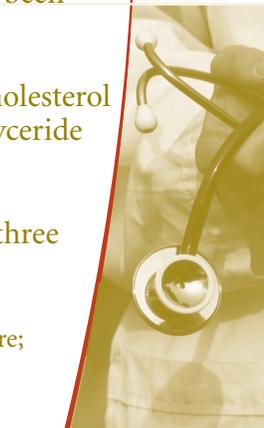
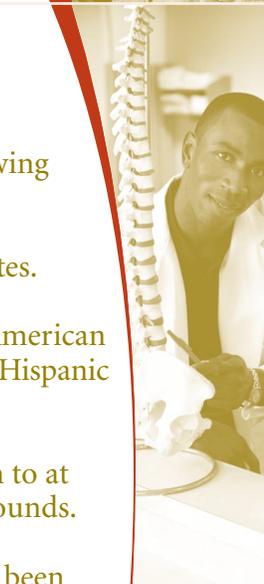
Anyone 45 years old or older should consider getting tested for diabetes. Symptoms of diabetes, such as feeling tired, losing weight, feeling hungry or thirsty, urinating frequently, vision problems, and having slow healing cuts and bruises, should be reported to a doctor right away.

## What Factors Increase My Risk for Type 2 Diabetes?

Besides age and being overweight, the following are risk factors for Type 2 diabetes:

- Have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes.
- Family background is African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Hispanic American/Latino.
- Have had gestational diabetes or gave birth to at least one baby weighing more than nine pounds.
- Blood pressure is 140/90 or higher or have been told have high blood pressure.
- Cholesterol levels are not normal. HDL cholesterol (“good” cholesterol) is 35 or lower or triglyceride level is 250 or higher.
- Are fairly inactive and exercise fewer than three times a week.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; APS Healthcare; and Louisiana Health Report Card.





# Preventing Diabetes: What Can I Do About My Risk?

## How Can Diabetes Be Prevented?

Preventing or delaying the development of diabetes in the first place is the best defense against Type 2 diabetes. According to a major research study, diet and exercise sharply reduced the chances that a person would develop diabetes.

You can do a lot to lower your chances of getting diabetes. Exercising regularly, reducing fat and calorie intake, and losing weight can all help you reduce your risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. Lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels also help you stay healthy.

If you are overweight, take these steps:

- Reach and maintain a reasonable body weight.
- Make wise food choices most of the time.
- Be physically active every day.

If you have blood pressure that is 140/90 or higher, then take these steps:

- Reach and maintain a reasonable body weight.
- Make wise food choices most of the time.
- Reduce your intake of salt and alcohol.
- Be physically active every day.
- Talk to your doctor about whether you need medicine to control your blood pressure.

If you have abnormal cholesterol levels, then take these steps:

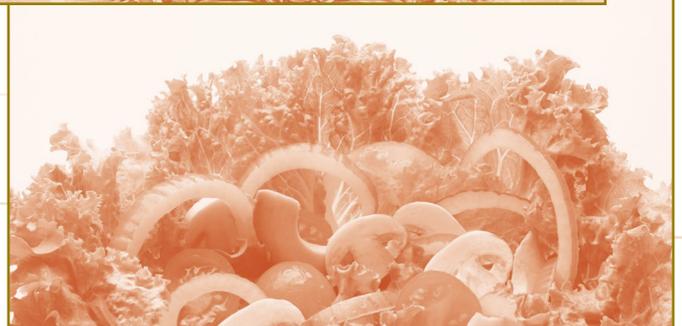
- Make wise food choices most of the time.
- Be physically active every day.
- Talk to your doctor about whether you need medicine to control your cholesterol levels.

Making big changes in your life is hard, especially if you are faced with more than one change. Your doctor, a dietitian or a counselor can help you make a plan.

## *Living with Diabetes*

Diabetes is a serious disease that cannot be cured, but careful control of blood sugar can prevent or delay the complications of the disease and improve quality of life now. The Healthy Together® health management program offered by OGB to PPO and EPO plan members provides help and support for members and their dependents so they do not have to “go it alone.”

Diabetes cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Good control requires a careful blend of diet, exercise, blood sugar monitoring and medication.



**Doing My Part: Getting Started**

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## Healthy Together®

Diabetes is a self-help disease. If you have diabetes, stick to a diet plan, monitor your blood sugar, exercise regularly, take prescribed medication, and make healthy lifestyle choices. People who take steps to control their diabetes can make a big difference in their health. Most people find it difficult to take these steps alone. The OGB Healthy Together Program will provide education and support in addition to the current treatment provided by your doctor. APS Healthcare, the administrator of the Healthy Together Program, will provide a health coach who will provide you with information, support and guidance on ways to feel your best while living with diabetes.

Your health coach will help you:

- Understand your disease/condition
- Identify symptoms of complication that require earlier treatment
- Encourage and educate about routine testing and screening
- Educate about medication prescribed by your doctor
- With nutritional guidance and support
- As a source for listening and feedback

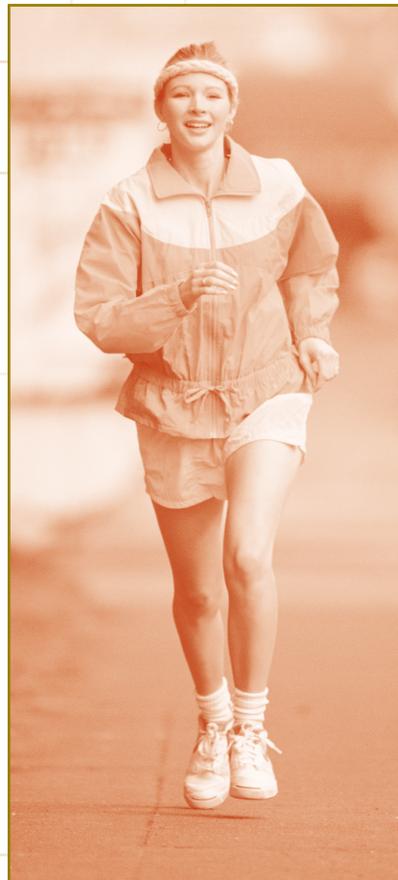
People who participate in the Healthy Together Program can expect to live more active, normal lives and better manage their disease. They can also expect to understand their condition better and learn the best ways to manage their diabetes. The APS Healthy Together Program will help people living with diabetes balance daily choices in order to feel their best and prevent long-term complications. For more information, you can call 1-877-343-3106.



## American Diabetes Association: America's Walk for Diabetes

To register for the Walk in a particular city in Louisiana, visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org). November is American Diabetes Month.

Sources for Health Talk - Focus on Diabetes: "What is Diabetes," – National Institutes of Health, APS Healthcare, and Louisiana Health Report Card; "Preventing Diabetes," – National Institutes of Health and APS Healthcare; "Living with Diabetes," – APS Healthcare; "American Diabetes Association: America's Walk for Diabetes" – American Diabetes Association



# Other News

## Communication Questionnaire Gets Good Response

OGB wishes to thank the 600-plus plan members who completed the communication questionnaire which was part of the summer issue of *For Your Benefit*. As a result of those responses, changes are presently being implemented to respond to your needs.

## New Sections at OGB Web Site

As part of OGB's ongoing effort to provide its plan members with valuable, up-to-date information, its Web site [www.groupbenefits.org](http://www.groupbenefits.org) will be continually upgraded with new sections and information as needed. Several new additions include **OGB in the News**, which has videos of interest concerning recent OGB activities that have garnered local, national and international media attention. **OGB 101** has been added to provide information concerning OGB operations and an introduction to health benefit issues. Also, the **Strategic Plan** for fiscal years 2005 – 2010 is now online.

## New Providers

The NeuroMedical Center Hospital has contracted with OGB and will be a member of the PPO network. This new 23-bed specialty hospital will provide neurosurgery, neurology, physical medicine and rehabilitation and neuropsychology services for the Baton Rouge area. The Neuromedical Center is scheduled to open October 1, 2004, and will be located at 10105 Park Row Circle, Baton Rouge. The hospital can be reached at **225-768-2473**.

Beacham Urology has contracted with OGB and is the only OGB contracted urology practice in Lafayette. Beacham Urology is a member of the PPO and EPO network of providers and is located at 913 South College Road, Suite 216, Lafayette. Beacham Urology can be reached at **337-289-9155**.

## OHP/Humana Changes Mail Order Prescription Program

OHP/Humana has changed its mail order prescription program to Walgreens HealthcarePlus. The benefits remain the same and pharmacy records for all members who currently use mail order are being automatically transferred to Walgreens. OHP/Humana is mailing notices to all plan members who currently use mail order.

## Optional Life Insurance Ends Midnight, December 31

The Optional Life Insurance for employees and dependents and the Personal Accident Insurance offered through Prudential Insurance Company of America will terminate at midnight on December 31, 2004. This action comes as a result of poor participation in the Optional Life and, as a consequence, unacceptably high losses. **The Basic and Basic Plus Supplemental Life and Dependent Life offered through Prudential is not affected and will NOT terminate.**

In order to change your Optional Term Life coverage from a group policy to an individual term life policy, you must complete Prudential's Portability Application form for you and your eligible dependents. Submit your completed application to Prudential no later than January 31, 2005. To obtain a Portability form, please contact your agency's human resources department.



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Dr. Cerise said it is often “easier to find a fried oyster po-boy and a cold beer” than it is to find fresh fruit in Louisiana. The key, he added, is the team concept because “it’s harder to fall off of the bandwagon if you’ve got teammates pushing you along.”

Herman Smith said, “We’re living in a generation where our kids are not going to outlive us and that has to change.” His brother Sherman summed up the whole Lighten Up Louisiana theme. “If you’re not active, get active. If you’re active, stay active. You will win!” he said.

For more information or to enter a team into the Lighten Up Louisiana competition, call 1-800-352-6491, download an entry form and team captain’s handbook at [www.lightenuplouisiana.org](http://www.lightenuplouisiana.org), and register online.



*“Subway Twins” Herman and Sherman Smith join Kip Wall, OGB’s CEO, in the commitment to Lighten Up Louisiana.*



# Service Offices



## Area Customer Service Offices

### Alexandria

900 Murray Street  
Room F-100  
Alexandria, LA 71301  
318.487.5731  
800.813.1578

### Baton Rouge

5825 Florida Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
225.925.6625  
800.272.8451

### Lafayette

825 Kaliste Saloom Road  
Building II, Suite 101  
Lafayette, LA 70508  
337.262.1357  
800.414.6409

### Lake Charles

710 West Prien Lake Road  
Suite 114  
Lake Charles, LA 70601  
337.475.8052  
800.525.3256

### Metairie

3421 North Causeway  
Suite 400  
Metairie, LA 70002  
504.838.5136  
800.335.6208

### Monroe

1400 North 19th Street  
Monroe, LA 71201  
318.362.3435  
800.335.5206

### Shreveport

1525 Fairfield Avenue  
Room 670  
Shreveport, LA 71101  
318.676.7026  
800.813.1574

### TDD (*hearing impaired*)

225.925.6770  
800.259.6771

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