

**EFAD Press release**  
**WDD 2019 – “Family and Diabetes”**

14 November 2019

*In the light of World Diabetes Day on 14 November 2019, EFAD European Specialist Dietetic Network (ESDN) for Diabetes calls on dietitians in Europe to play a key role in supporting and educating people with diabetes who are members of a family on the need to prioritise diabetes management and to achieve a health dietary plan and a healthy way of living for the whole family.*

The [European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians \(EFAD\)](#) and its European Specialist Dietetic Network (ESDN) for Diabetes proudly support the [International Diabetes Federation \(IDF\)](#) on [World Diabetes Day \(WDD\)](#) focusing also this year on family and diabetes and would like to **emphasize the significant role dietitians can have in diabetes prevention and management of people with diabetes in the family.**

World Diabetes Day is dedicated, for a second year, to “Family and diabetes”. Potentially, DM affects all families and therefore a good knowledge of the symptoms and risk factors of all types of DM is vital for its early diagnosis and prevention. Almost 80% of type 2 DM cases can be prevented by adopting a healthy lifestyle and controlling body weight, while 70% of early adult deaths are caused by habits adopted during adolescence. When the family eats healthy meals and exercises regularly, all family members adopt and reinforce behaviors that allow the prevention of T2DM or easier management of T2DM, when it occurs. Reducing the incidence of DM is therefore beginning at home and family support is extremely important for prevention, early detection, education, psycho-emotional support, care and management of DM.

It is important to prevent and fight increased body weight and obesity and this requires a differentiating and modifying lifestyle, with personalized interventions in nutrition and increased physical activity. A more aggressive intervention is also proposed for the case of obese children and adolescents, along with counseling and behavioral therapy for children and the family. Among other things, it is recommended to reduce calories, prefer low calorie and low glycemic index foods, and avoid sugar and sugary drinks. A diet high in vegetables, fiber, lean meat, fish and dairy products with a low fat content is desirable. There should also be an increase in physical activity. Thirty minutes of moderate physical activity each day (walking, jogging or other aerobic exercise) and a 5-10% weight loss can reduce the risk of T2DM by 58%. Dietitians in Europe have an integral role to play in helping people with diabetes to develop an individualized eating plan and to manage more effectively their diabetes. Furthermore, by promoting the importance of equitable access for all people at risk of diabetes to essential self-management knowledge required to achieve optimal diabetes outcomes, **dietitians can contribute the most to educating all the members of the family on the importance of lifestyle changes and nutrition therapy** as core components of the prevention and the management of the disease.

**EFAD**The European Federation of  
the Associations of Dietitians**THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN DIETETICS**

With the focus of the World Diabetes Day 2019 by IDF being '***The Family and Diabetes***', ESDN Diabetes of EFAD has supported the International Sweeteners Association (ISA) video "[Life with diabetes can be tasty: Gisèle's story](#)", as part of the ISA two-year campaign for WDD. Through the portrait of Gisèle, EFAD and ISA aim to remind everyone that it is possible to live a tasty life while keeping diabetes under control, emphasizing the crucial role of weight loss, healthy eating with reduced simple sugars and high fat meals and increased fiber and low GI foods.

### **Ask your dietitian**

Dietitians can support families in diabetes prevention and care by helping individuals and their families to improve the family diet. It is important to ask a dietitian to help to educate the family on how to follow a healthy lifestyle through better nutrition, to enable family members, across the life-course, to make the right dietary choices and sustain healthy lifestyles and finally to plan an individualized dietary program for those with diabetes and for the whole family.

# EFAD

The European Federation of  
the Associations of Dietitians

THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN DIETETICS

## ABOUT EFAD

EFAD is the voice of 35.000 European dietitians - more than half the profession – and is the only organisation advocating for dietitians in Europe.

EFAD alerts European politicians, the European Commission, WHO European Region and others about how dietitians, as key nutrition professionals in Europe, are contributing to a healthier Europe.

The aims of EFAD are to:

- Promote the development of the dietetic profession
- Develop dietetics on a scientific and professional level in the common interest of the member associations
- Facilitate communication between national dietetic associations and other organisations – professional, educational, and governmental
- Encourage a better nutrition situation for the population of the member countries of Europe.

Membership of the Federation is open all National Associations of Dietitians from member states of Europe. EFAD currently has 35 member associations and 38 Schools of Dietitians representing over 35,000 dietitians and 9,000 students in 29 European countries.

You can find out more from the EFAD web site [www.efad.org](http://www.efad.org)

### Contact:

The European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians  
Judith Liddell RD  
EFAD Executive Director  
+49 2822 68367  
[secretariat@efad.org](mailto:secretariat@efad.org)

Charilaos Dimosthenopoulos  
Clinical Dietitian  
Head of Dietetic Department, Laiko General Hospital, Athens, Greece  
Lead of European Specialist Dietetic Network (ESDN) for Diabetes  
[harisdimos@gmail.com](mailto:harisdimos@gmail.com)