

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 16 February 2016 in Brampton Community Centre. 16 members took lunch in the community café; 28 members attended the meeting which followed; several members sent their apologies.

Ann Oswin and Jean Taylor gave some updates:

- **Natural Heart Month.** Men aged 65-74 can take advantage of a heart check at Brampton surgery.
- Cards and the monthly quiz are on sale at reception.
- **PhysioDom:** a device which connects to your TV and regularly records your weight and daily activities as part of a scheme organised locally by Alston health care. 100 over-65s are needed for the trial.
Contact: Sue Gilbertson, Tel: 01434 382808
Leaflet: http://50plusforum.bramptoncumbria.uk/docs/2016_Feb_physiodom.jpg
Email: physiodom@cmsl.org.uk Web: www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk/physiodom
- **CEA card:** This is a cinema card for the disabled. It allows the card holder's helper to accompany them to the cinema for free. The Carlisle Vue is a participating cinema. Full details on the website: www.ceacard.co.uk

The Chair, Carol Saunders, welcomed the guest speaker, Caroline (Cags) Cousins, to talk about 'Keeping healthy: diabetes, diet and related issues'.

Mrs Cousins was familiar to many in the audience; for several years she had been a practice nurse in Brampton.

The incidence of type-2 diabetes is increasing both locally and globally, and across the whole age range. With the help of some visual aids and drawing on the knowledge of members of her audience Mrs Cousins explained how our body gets the sugar it needs (for energy) from the food we eat and how the level of sugar in the blood is normally regulated by insulin made by the pancreas. She explained how, if we eat more than we need over a long period of time, cells, especially liver cells, don't respond properly to insulin - there is 'insulin resistance' - and the blood sugar level rises dramatically. This is the main symptom of type-2 diabetes. High blood sugar levels sustained over a period of time have several harmful effects, for example on vision and on circulation.

The good news is that the changes are relatively slow to take place and so the condition can be recognised and, if behaviour and diet are modified, the changes can be reversed. The key messages were: cut down the intake of food - eat smaller portions; exercise more regularly to increase the uptake of sugar by muscle cells. 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise every day is ideal. The exercise should be enjoyable and can be in the form of walking, swimming, gardening, housework, for example. It often helps if it is done in social groups. There are wheelchair exercise groups. There is a scheme, 'exercise on prescription', which allows gym use with reduced or no membership fee.

The relative merits of different types of food were discussed - again with input from members. We were made aware of the very high sugar content of some foods such as jelly and 'energy' drinks; suitable low sugar alternatives were suggested. Other topics covered were: types of fats, which foods to choose to include the most beneficial types; the calories in alcohol; how type-1 diabetes is different; risks groups.

Two leaflets are on the website:

http://50plusforum.bramptoncumbria.uk/docs/2016_Feb_100_Cals_exercise.jpg

http://50plusforum.bramptoncumbria.uk/docs/2016_Feb_100_Cals_portions.jpg

The Chair thanked our speaker and the meeting ended with tea; no biscuits today!

The next Forum meeting will be on **Tuesday 19 April 2016**.