

2500 leg amputations each year in KZN (due to diabetes) can be reduced through regular exercise and a healthier lifestyle, says MEC Dhlomo

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Six leg amputations per day, or 2500 per year at KZN public hospitals alone. That's the shocking toll that diabetes is taking on the lives of ordinary people. This, among other reasons, is what has spurred on KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo to sound alarm bells and urge the people of the province to claim their lives back from the scourge of diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases.

Speaking at the 5km Durban Wellness Festival, on the beachfront this morning, MEC Dhlomo said: *"Diabetes, alongside other Non-Communicable Diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke and others, has exploded and become a major problem. We are told that six leg amputations per day or 2500 per day are done at government hospitals here in KZN.*

"We all must therefore try and increase awareness about these diseases. That is why we are also urging our fellow compatriots to make lifestyle adjustments. Getting engaged in regular exercise, getting rid of bad habits like smoking, and alcohol and substance abuse; and following a healthy and balanced diet, can delay the onset of diabetes and these other diseases."

With World Diabetes Day being commemorated across the globe on Wednesday (14 November 2018), MEC Dhlomo urged ordinary human beings to get into the habit of getting screened and tested for diabetes free of charge at public health facilities at least once a year.

He argues that ordinary South Africans, and those who have been diagnosed with diabetes – or have a family history of it – should become more knowledgeable about the disease.

"Each and every person must know about diabetes. They must know about it more than healthcare professionals. Even if you're diagnosed with diabetes, it should not automatically follow that next year we are amputating your leg. There's a lot you can do to delay the onset of complications.

I always embrace those South Africans who participate in running and walking, because they reduce the amount of chronic treatment that we give them. This impacts positively on the budget for health through the saving that we make. By participating in such activities, you are improving your own quality of life, and you will live longer. Even if you have diabetes, and you are an elderly person, we still need you because you have a lot of wisdom to pass on to current and future generations."

On Wednesday, World Diabetes Day will be commemorated across the globe under the theme *"The Family & Diabetes."*



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