

Eric Miller | Staff Reporter

March 23, 2018 9:30 AM, EDT

Truck Drivers' Risk for Diabetes Far Greater Than National Average



Pfeiffer by John Sommers II for Transport Topics

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Health education specialist Kay Pfeiffer compares diabetic professional truck drivers who are not testing their blood sugar with “driving at night without headlights — and you’re going to crash.”

Pfeiffer, a vice president at diabetes management company TrueLifeCare, said there are an estimated 500,000 diabetic truck drivers in the United States — about one of every seven.

As a group, truck drivers have a 50% higher rate of diabetes than the national average.

Even more alarming is that only 25% of drivers are testing their blood sugar as recommended, Pfeiffer told drivers at a March 22 session how to manage diabetes on the road. The event was part of the 2018 Mid-America Trucking Show here.



- Complete coverage
- Photo gallery

“But if you have Type 2 diabetes, you can successfully manage your diabetes if you do one thing: Check your blood sugar,” she said. “If you don’t know what your sugar level is, you’re going to crash. If you choose not to manage your diabetes, your diabetes will manage you.”

Common risk factors for Diabetes

- Smoking
- Overweight/obesity
- Physical inactivity
- High blood pressure

Diabetes is a disease in which the body’s ability to produce or respond to the hormone insulin is impaired, resulting in abnormal metabolism of carbohydrates and elevated levels of glucose—surge in the blood and urine.

Pfeiffer said much like a driver does a pretrip inspection to ensure his equipment is in operating order, a diabetic driver should test his blood sugar, which helps him make the right

decision and feel his best, gives him a baseline number, provides immediate feedback and alerts him to his levels.

In short, it keeps him out of danger, she added.

“Type 2 diabetes is reversible,” she said. “If you have cancer, you can’t just say, ‘I’m going to get rid of it.’ But Type 2 you can actually get rid of.”