Celebrity Cook Paula Deen's Diabetes Disclosure Sparks High-Calorie Controversy

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Paula Deen, 64, a celebrity cook who made her name promoting buttery, sugary cuisine, was criticized in the media this week when she announced she'd kept mum about living with a type 2 diabetes diagnosis for three years, Time magazine reported.

The kind of southern-style, high-calorie food that Deen promoted has been linked to weight gain and obesity, both well-known contributors to the development of type 2 diabetes. (The condition can develop when the body's insulin is no longer able to break down sugars in the form of carbohydrates.)

But the wave of criticism Deen faces also prompted health experts to weigh in. "I could definitely use this as a lesson that [shows] eating large amounts [of fatty and sugary foods] can lead to obesity, and that is a risk for developing type 2 diabetes," said Constance Brown-Riggs, a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

For example, regularly scarfing down Deen's notorious Lady's Brunch Burger, a hamburger topped with a fried egg, bacon and sandwiched between two doughnuts, is a recipe for weight gain and unhealthy living. (But then who knows how often Deen actually indulged in these dietary disasters, y'all?)

Indeed, the question of how much responsibility individuals should carry for their food lifestyle choices was raised after Deen's announcement. What's more, to what extent should her show's producers be held accountable? Let's face it, viewers tempted to try recipes from Deen's hit Food Network program, *Paula's Best Dishes*, might probably benefit from an education about the negative effects of a high-calorie diet. But that's also information a viewer could pick up on his or her own. So who's to blame if people use these recipes to cook meals, gain weight and eventually develop diabetes?

Then other questions are: Why did Deen wait three years to go public about her type 2 diabetes diagnosis while she continued to promote fatty, sugar-laden foods the whole time? And did the timing coincide with the fact that she's now a spokesperson for Novo Nordisk, which produces diabetes med Victoza? (Click here to read what Deen's critics said.).

For those with type 2 diabetes, doctors say medication is extremely beneficial to help control their glucose. Other treatments to keep the condition's life-threatening symptoms in check include getting exercise and eating a nutritious, low-calorie diet. What's more, medical experts agree that getting screened for type 2 diabetes symptoms on a regular basis is a good idea. This is especially true if you're someone with risk factors, such as being overweight and sedentary and having family members with the condition.

Click here to read about why calorie reduction is key for diabetics' weight loss.

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