

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## **UT SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL EXPERTS TO ADDRESS DIABETES, OBESITY AND HEART DISEASE IN FREE PUBLIC FORUM SPONSORED BY SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL FOUNDATION**

DALLAS – Aug. 29 , 2001 – Prevention and treatment of diabetes, obesity and heart disease – and their epidemic proportion in the United States -- will be the focus of medical experts from UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas during the Southwestern Medical Foundation Public Forum on Wednesday, Sept. 19.

The free public forum, “An American Epidemic: Diabetes, Obesity and Heart Disease,” begins at 7 p.m. in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium on the UT Southwestern South Campus, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd. The panel of physicians and scientists will address the toll these diseases are taking on society and the importance of understanding how lifestyle choices affect long-term health. Free parking will be available.

Dr. Roger Unger, co-director of the Touchstone Center for Diabetes Research; Dr. Michael Brown, director of the Erik Jonsson Center for Research in Molecular Genetics and Human Disease and winner of the 1985 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine; Dr. Paul Grayburn, professor of internal medicine and chief of cardiology at the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center; and Dr. Scott Grundy, director of the Center for Human Nutrition, will each make presentations at the forum and answer questions from the audience at the forum’s conclusion.

The forum moderator will be Dr. Donald Seldin, vice president of medical center relations for Southwestern Medical Foundation and holder of the William Buchanan Chair in Internal Medicine and a UT System Professorship in Internal Medicine at UT Southwestern.

Unger, holder of the Touchstone/West Distinguished Chair in Diabetes Research, has been honored in the United States and Europe for his diabetes research. During the forum, he will examine the diabetes problem in the United States by looking at the cultural changes in Americans’ diets that began in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

“The incidence of obesity-related diabetes among children is unprecedented and can be partially attributed to the high-fat diet, filled with fast food and convenience items, readily

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adopted by many Americans after World War II,” Unger said.

Brown, holder of the W.A. (Monty) Moncrief Distinguished Chair in Cholesterol and Arteriosclerosis Research and the Paul J. Thomas Chair in Medicine, will discuss the role genes play in diabetes.

“Studies on identical twins show a strong genetic predisposition to diabetes,” he said. “If one has the adult form of diabetes, the other twin has at least an 80 percent chance of developing the disease.”

Grayburn will expand the discussion to include how obesity and diabetes increase the risk of developing heart disease – the No. 1 killer of Americans.

“Public health measures to reduce the incidence of these risk factors could have a profound impact on heart disease in this country,” Grayburn said.

Grundy, chairman of clinical nutrition and holder of the Distinguished Chair in Human Nutrition, said that changing public behavior is the key to a healthier society. He will sound a wake-up call for physicians and outline a plan to improve the health of children and adults by stressing lifestyle changes.

The foundation initiated its series of public forums in 1995 as a community service to Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex residents. Although the forum is free, please make reservations by calling 214-648-4557. For more information, call Southwestern Medical Foundation at 214-351-6143.

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