

TYPE II DIABETES
Your Guide for Taking Control

Common Complications of Diabetes

Diabetic eye disease. People with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy (blindness), cataract (clouding of the lens) and glaucoma (vision loss due to increased pressure within the eye). **Action plan:** Get an eye examination at least once a year. Eye exams can detect diabetic eye conditions before symptoms appear. If caught early, most can be successfully treated, saving your eyesight.

Nerve damage (neuropathy). Nerve damage numbs parts of the body, especially the feet and legs, and can also affect internal organs. Nerve damage to the feet can keep you from feeling sores and blisters and increase your chance of infection. **Action plan:** Check your feet and legs for small cuts and blisters often (or have someone do it for you). Wash and dry your feet and change socks daily. Trim your toenails regularly to avoid ingrown nails.

Narrowed blood vessels. Diabetes can narrow blood vessels, causing damage to the heart, kidneys, limbs and eyes. **Action plan:** Visit your doctor for screenings to check blood vessel and organ function.



What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a problem with how the body uses digested food as fuel. The body breaks down food into glucose (blood sugar), which is the body's fuel. For glucose to get from the bloodstream into the cells for growth and energy, insulin is needed. Insulin is produced by the pancreas, a gland behind the stomach.

In people with diabetes, the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or the cells do not respond to the insulin that is produced. Glucose builds up in the blood, overflows into the urine and passes out of the body. Thus, the body loses its main source of fuel even though the blood contains large amounts of glucose.

There are three forms of diabetes: type I, type II and gestational. The most common of these is type II.

More adults than ever before, and even some children, are developing type II diabetes, leading some researchers to label it an epidemic.

There is no cure for diabetes. However, if you have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar levels and making healthy lifestyle changes can help you lower your risk of diabetes-related health problems.

Know Your Numbers

You can check your blood sugar using a device called a glucose meter, usually by pricking your finger to draw a drop of blood. Tips on blood sugar monitoring:

- Ask your health care provider how often you should check your blood sugar levels and what range you should strive for.
- Ask about having a hemoglobin A1c test once or twice a year. This test provides a picture of blood glucose levels over several months, showing how well you are controlling your diabetes overall.
- There are many types of glucose meters available, varying greatly in cost, features and ease of use. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about which meter is right for you.
- Don't avoid testing because you've lapsed on some of your healthy lifestyle choices. Learning to deal with blood sugar ups and downs is part of controlling diabetes successfully.

Exercise smart: If you haven't eaten for more than an hour or your blood sugar is less than 100 to 120, have a snack (an apple, baby carrots, half a bagel or a glass of milk) before you start exercising.

What Can I Eat?



If you're living with diabetes, one of the best ways to control your weight and blood sugar is with a healthy diet. But perhaps you miss some foods you used to enjoy. Instead of concentrating on what you can't have, try these tips for focusing on delicious and healthy foods.

- **ADD** lemon juice or salsa to steamed vegetables for a zesty taste.
- **FILL** up on crunchy salads.
- **TRY** grilled or broiled chicken and fish with spicy or zingy fat-free marinades instead of fried foods.
- **SAMPLE** soy. Chances are your local market stocks some "fake" meat products, such as veggie burgers, that cut out fat and calories without skimping on taste. Give it a try … you just might fool yourself.
- **EAT** well, but pay attention to portion sizes.

Get Moving!

For people with type II diabetes, exercise helps control weight, regulate blood sugar and keep the heart and lungs healthy. No matter what your fitness level, any amount of physical activity will help you manage your condition.

Exercise tips:

- Talk with your doctor and get a checkup before you start an exercise program.
- Work at your level. If you have not exercised for a long time, start slowly and work up to 30 to 45 minutes at least three times per week.
- Try walking, swimming, dancing or riding a bicycle. You can also exercise by bowling, cleaning house, mowing the lawn or gardening.



SAMPLE

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