

Diabetes

Diabetes is a health condition where the blood glucose (or sugar in the blood) is too high. There are two main types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body does not make insulin (a hormone that helps sugar get into your cells to be used for energy). Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes and occurs when the body does not make enough insulin or does not use it very well.

Risk

High blood sugar can cause damage to the blood vessels. If left untreated, diabetes can cause serious health complications including the following:

- Heart Disease
- Eye Damage
- Kidney Disease
- Foot Problems
- Nerve Pain

Medication

There are many types of medications to help lower and control blood sugar. Your prescriber will work with you to choose the best medicine for you.

Blood pressure medications may be prescribed even if you do not have high blood pressure because these medicines can help protect your kidneys. A cholesterol medication called a statin may also be prescribed even if you have normal cholesterol levels because statins help to lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Adherence

Taking your medications correctly is an important part of managing your diabetes. Talk with your pharmacist about ways to remember to take your medications.

Monitoring

Your health care provider may recommend regular monitoring of your blood sugar. A blood test called an A1c is also used to monitor blood sugar and gives information about your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months. The common blood sugar and A1c goals are outlined below. Your health care provider may have different goals for you. It is important to talk with your health care provider about your specific blood sugar and A1c goals.

Fasting Blood Sugar Goal	Post Prandial Blood Sugar Goal	A1c Goal
No food or beverages other than water for at least 8 hours	2 hours after eating	
80 – 130 mg/dL	< 180 mg/dL	< 7%

If blood sugar gets too low (< 70 mg/dL) it can be very dangerous. **It is very important to have a plan in place on how to treat low blood sugar.** The Rule of 15 outlined below provides helpful steps you can take:



*Fast Acting Carbohydrates: glucose tablets, ½ c juice or regular soda, 1 tbsp sugar or honey, hard candies

In addition to blood sugar monitoring, the following health screening are also recommended:

Recommended Health Screenings in Diabetes		
Eye Exams (at least once yearly)	Foot Exams (at least yearly)	Dental Exam
Renal Function Test (at least once yearly)	Blood Pressure Screening (at every routine visit)	



Other things you can do

In addition to medication, a healthy lifestyle can help control your blood sugar. Some helpful hints include:

- Follow a healthy diet
- Be physically active
- Manage stress
- If you smoke, get help to quit
- If you drink, limit your alcohol intake
- Get involved in a local DSME program

Resources

1. American Diabetes Association (ADA). <https://www.diabetes.org/>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Diabetes. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html>
3. Mayo Clinic. Diabetes. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20371444>
4. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (NIH). What is Diabetes? <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes>