

Reducing Your Risks

Having diabetes puts you at a higher risk for developing other health problems. However, if you understand the risks, you can take steps now to lower your chance of diabetes-related complications, such as kidney damage, nerve damage and vision loss. Your doctor or Diabetes Management Nurse can explain why complications happen and how they can be avoided. And, you should play an active role in reducing your risk. By making an effort you can help reduce your risks for several of these complications.

Start by learning about these complications and by taking these precautions:

- ▽ Don't smoke.
- ▽ Schedule regular medical checkups and medical tests.
- ▽ See an eye doctor (ophthalmologist) at least once a year.
- ▽ Keep your feet dry and clean. Look out for redness or sores, and report these to your healthcare team as soon as you find them. If you have trouble seeing the bottom of your feet, ask a family member or friend to help you.
- ▽ Be sensitive to your body—recognize when you aren't feeling well, and contact your care team if you need help identifying the problem.

Did you know?

Lowering your cholesterol can decrease your risk for stroke, heart attack, or other circulation problems.

True or False

Controlling your diabetes can help reduce your risk for heart disease. It's **TRUE**. If your blood sugar or blood pressure levels are too high for too long, your blood vessels can become “sticky.” This makes it easier for blood clots to form...which can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Words to Know

Complication:

Another health problem that can happen when you have diabetes

Blood Pressure:

The amount of pressure that is applied to your arteries when blood is pumped through your body

Cholesterol:

A waxy substance that is in your blood that exists in two types: LDL (“bad”) and HDL (“good”)

Hypertension:

When your blood pressure is higher than 140/90

Things you can do....



Follow your healthy eating plan

Are you proud of the way you ate today? _____



Keep Active

What is your favorite outdoor activity? _____



Take medications

Did you take your meds today? _____



Monitor your blood sugar

What was your blood sugar number last time you checked? _____



Check your feet

Any pain, cuts or sores on your feet? _____



Brush and floss your teeth

When was your last dentist visit? _____



Check your blood pressure

Do you know what your blood pressure is? _____



Don't smoke

What can help you quit? _____



Get an eye exam (which includes dilation) at least once a year

Have you had an eye exam this year? _____

Recommended Tests	Target Levels	Frequency
A1C	Less than 7%	At least 2 times a year
Blood Pressure	Less than 140/90	Every visit
Lipids HDL (good cholesterol) LDL (bad cholesterol) Triglycerides	Over 40 (for men); Over 50 (for women) Less than 100 Less than 150	At least every year
Diabetic Eye Exam		Every year
Foot Exam (visual)		Every visit to your healthcare provider
Foot Exam (with sensory testing)		Every year