

Care Gram

Diabetes

What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which the blood glucose (sugar) level is too high.

- The body usually gets the energy it needs from the sugar (glucose) in the food eaten
- Having diabetes means the body is not able to use the sugar in the blood properly
- As a result, the blood sugar level builds up in the blood, but the body does not have enough energy to work

Two Major Kinds of Diabetes

Type 1

- The pancreas (a gland behind the stomach) makes little or no insulin, which is needed to help the cells use blood sugar
- People with Type 1 need daily insulin shots along with proper diet and exercise in order to keep the blood sugar level controlled

Type 2

- The pancreas makes some insulin, but it does not make enough or the cells do not use insulin properly
- Some people can control their blood sugar level with diet and exercise, while others need diabetes pills and/or insulin to control the blood sugar level

Signs and Symptoms of Hyperglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Increased thirst (dry mouth)
- Hunger
- Blurred vision
- Stomach pain, vomiting
- Extreme tiredness or drowsiness
- Weight loss (without trying to lose)
- Pain, numbness or tingling in the feet
- Sexual problems

Note: With Type 2 diabetes, you may have no early symptoms.

Managing Diabetes

You control diabetes – diabetes does not have to control you.



**Licking Memorial
Health Systems**

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Meal Planning

- Visiting a dietitian is recommended if you are newly-diagnosed, you have not seen a dietitian for 3 years, or if you are having problems controlling your blood sugar level
- You need to eat 3 meals a day
- You need consistent portions with each meal
- You need to maintain a healthy weight

Activity

- Lowers the blood sugar level and is good for your heart and blood pressure
- Start slowly if you have not been physically active
- Check with your doctor first
- You do not need vigorous activity – walking is good if you do not have any foot, knee, or leg problems
- Stop if you start having pain or breathing problems

Medication

- Type 1 – you need to have daily injection(s) of insulin
- Type 2 – you may need 1, 2, or 3 different pills – each works a different way
 - You may or may not need insulin
 - You may not need medication
- Insulin instruction needs to be taught individually

Monitoring

- You will learn how to check your blood glucose level with a glucose meter
- Needs to be taught individually
- You need to check your blood sugar level to tell how your body is responding to food, exercise, and medication

Target Blood Sugar Goals

- Before meals: 80-130 mg/dL
- 2 hours after meals: 180 mg/dL
- A1C level: less than 7%

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Symptoms occur quickly.

- Nervousness, shaky, sweaty, irritable, dizzy, hungry, slurred speech, and weakness

Causes

- Skipping or delaying meals or snacks
- Too much medicine
- Too much exercise without enough food

Treatment

- Check your blood sugar level if possible
- Eat or drink something such as:
 - ½ glass of orange juice, 1 glass of milk, 3 to 4 glucose tablets, ½ cup of regular cola, 6 to 8 hard candies, or a small tube of decorative cake icing
- Wait 15 minutes and test your blood sugar again – if it is still low, eat or drink another snack

Routine Health Care Recommendations to Prevent Complications

Check feet daily. See your doctor for any open wound areas, signs of infection (redness, swelling, hot feeling). Do not cut corns or calluses, and do not apply heat to feet. See your healthcare provider about foot care. Your doctor should check your feet every visit.

Yearly exam – you should have:

- A dilated eye exam
- A flu vaccine
- Cholesterol blood test
- Urine test for albumin (protein)

2 times a year, you should:

- See a dentist
- Have a HgA1C blood test (this gives the doctor an overall average of how your blood sugar levels have been running)

Every diabetes visit, your doctor will:

- Check your blood pressure (less than 130/80 for patients with diabetes)
- Check your weight
- Review your blood sugar level

Ask your doctor if you should:

- Take aspirin every day
- Take any other medications

Do not smoke.

- Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) offers free tobacco cessation counseling and nicotine replacement. Call (220) 564-7848 (348-Quit) for an appointment if you need help to quit smoking.