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Living with Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert sugar, starches, and other food into energy needed for daily living. The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors such as obesity and lack of exercise appear to play roles. Although diabetes is serious, people who manage their diabetes properly can live long, healthy, happy lives.

Breakdown in the Body

When you eat food, the body breaks down all of the sugars and starches into glucose, which is the basic fuel for the cells in the body. Insulin takes the sugar from the blood into the cells. When glucose builds up in the blood instead of going into the cells, it can cause two problems:

- Right away, your cells may be starved for energy.
- Over time, high blood glucose levels may hurt your eyes, kidneys, nerves, or heart.

Taking Care of the Body

Make it a priority to take good care of your body. The time you spend now on eye care, foot care and skin care as well as your heart health and oral health could delay or prevent the onset of dangerous diabetes complications later in life.

Action Steps Now

- **Stop smoking:** Smoking aggravates many problems that people with diabetes already face, such as heart and blood vessel disease.
- **Reduce alcohol consumption:** Alcohol can lead to low blood sugar.
- **Control Stress:** Stress can alter blood glucose levels. It also blocks the body from releasing insulin.

Diabetes Care Plan

People with diabetes have the same nutritional needs as anyone else. Along with exercise and medications if needed (insulin or oral diabetes pills), nutrition is important for good diabetes control. By eating well-balanced meals in the correct amounts, you can keep

your blood glucose level as close to normal (non-diabetes level) as possible. A diabetes care plan aims to balance the foods you eat with your exercise and, possibly, medications. You can do two types of checks to help keep track of how your plan is working: blood glucose and ketone checks.

Blood Glucose Monitoring

Blood glucose is the amount of glucose in your blood at a given time. Your blood glucose reading lets you know if you have:

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) or

Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar)

AND

If food, exercise, medication, or stress caused you to have hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia.

To prevent diabetes complications, it's important to keep your blood glucose within target range. Daily monitoring of your blood glucose helps you stay within your target range by showing you what triggers a change in your reading. Glucose monitoring is the main tool you have to check your diabetes control.

This check tells you your blood glucose at any one time. Keeping a log of your results is vital. When you bring your log to your health care provider, you have a good picture of your body's response to your diabetes care plan. You see what works and what doesn't, which allows your healthcare providers to make needed changes.

Remember to ask your doctor:

How often you should check your blood glucose.
What your personal blood glucose target range should be.

Good Diabetes Management =

Regular Blood Glucose Monitoring +

Healthy Nutrition +

Regular Exercise +

**Blood Pressure, Cholesterol,
Stress Management.**

Suggested Screening Schedule

TEST	HOW OFTEN	TARGET
A1C	Every 3 months	7.0% or lower
Blood Pressure	Each Visit	130/80 or lower
ACR (Microalb/Creat Ratio)	Once a year	0–2.0 mal 0–2.8 female
Total Cholesterol	Once a year	Below 5.0 mmol/L
HDL Cholesterol	Once a year	Above 1.0 mmol/L male Above 1.3 mmol/L female
LDL Cholesterol	Once a year	Below 2.0 mmol/L
Triglycerides	Once a year	Below 1.5 mmol/L
Chol/HDL Ratio	Once a year	Below 4.0 mmol/L
Eye Exam	Once a year	
Foot Exam	At each visit	
Dentist Exam	Every 3–6 months	

Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result
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Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result
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Blood Glucose Tracking

MONTH			BLOOD GLUCOSE (mmol/L)					
Date			Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner	
			before	after	before	after	before	after
	MON	TIME						
		RESULTS						
	TUES	TIME						
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		RESULTS						

Weight this week:

		INSULIN (Units)					
Bedtime before after			Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime	Ketones (+ or -)
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Notes

Keeping accurate records of your health throughout the year will help your physician and health care providers make better informed decisions regarding your care.