

Tips

1. Weight loss helps people with diabetes in two important ways. First, it lowers insulin resistance. This allows your natural insulin (in people with type 2 diabetes) to do a better job lowering blood glucose levels. Second, it improves blood fat and blood pressure levels. People with diabetes are about twice as likely to get cardiovascular disease as most people. Lowering blood fats and blood pressure is a way to reduce that risk.

2. Because of the dangers associated with diabetes, always wear a medical alert bracelet indicating that you have diabetes and whether you take insulin. Also keep hard candy or glucose tablets with you while exercising in case your blood sugar drops precipitously.

3. Here are some essential steps for keeping healthy:
 1. Practice good blood sugar control.
 2. Monitor your blood sugar levels regularly
 3. Have your blood tested every three to six months, or more often if you're pregnant.
 4. Eat a healthy, varied diet, sticking to foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and limit sweets like candy.
 5. Exercise regularly and maintain a normal weight.
 6. Avoid risky behaviors, such as smoking or drug or alcohol abuse.
 7. Learn as much as you can about diabetes, and educate others close to you.

4. Foot Care and Diabetes

Common foot problems can cause many complications, including athlete's foot, fungal infections in nails, calluses, corns, blisters, bunions, dry skin, sores, hammertoes, ingrown toenails, and plantar warts.

While anyone can have these problems, they're more critical for people with diabetes because:

- If you have *nerve damage* you may not feel small wounds that need treatment.
- Poor blood flow can slow wound healing.
- If you're *immune-suppressed* you may be more prone to infection.
- *Damaged foot muscle nerves* may prevent your foot from aligning properly, causing you to put more pressure on one area of the foot, leading to foot sores and pressure point ulcers.

Prevention tips: Make time for foot care daily. Wash, dry and examine the tops and bottoms of your feet. Check for cracked skin, cuts, scratches, wounds, blisters, redness, calluses, and other changes. Use antibiotic creams recommended by your doctor and apply sterile bandages to protect cuts. Prevent ingrown toenails by cutting toenails straight across; don't cut corners. Don't go barefoot and always protect your feet. Make sure you wear properly-fitting footwear.

If you develop even minor foot problems, treat them right away or see a doctor. And see a foot doctor (podiatrist) every two or three months.

Checking your feet daily means you can catch small things and get them treated before they become serious. Make it part of your daily morning routine -- it doesn't take long.

5. Exercise, in combination with a healthy diet, is one of the best things you can do to take care of yourself if you have diabetes.

Why exercise?

- Exercise burns calories, which will help you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.
- Regular exercise can help your body respond to insulin and is known to be effective in managing blood glucose. Exercise can lower blood glucose and possibly reduce the amount of medication you need to treat diabetes, or even eliminate the need for medication.
- Exercise can improve your circulation, especially in your arms and legs, where people with diabetes can have problems.
- Exercise can help reduce your cholesterol and high blood pressure. High cholesterol and high blood pressure can lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- Exercise helps reduce stress, which can raise your glucose level.
- It can lower your risk for heart disease, reduce your cholesterol levels and your blood pressure.
- In some people, exercise combined with a meal plan, can control Type 2 Diabetes without the need for medications.

6. It is important that you include fruits as part of your healthy diabetic diet because it contains high minerals and vitamins. However, you need to choose the right fruits as different fruits have different degrees of glucose or carbohydrates and fibre content. For example, eating substantial amounts of watermelon can increase your blood glucose level. Fruits such as apples, pears and kiwi fruits contain glucose and reasonable amounts of fibre, so glucose levels are generally reasonable.

It is recommended that you have at least two servings of fruits a day. Try to replace your usual snacks with pieces of fruit.

Avoid taking fruit juice because a glass of fruit juice contains more than the recommended amount of fruits you need. Moreover, the natural sugar in the fruit juices can cause higher blood glucose levels than eating the fruits whole.