



DIABETES COMPLICATIONS

WHAT CAUSES COMPLICATIONS in DIABETICS?

- Diabetes has immediate short-term and long-term complications.
- When you are not properly managing your type 2 diabetes, your risk of diabetes-related complications increases.
- An A1C higher than 6% increases your chances of diabetes-related complications, including stroke, heart disease, blindness and loss of limbs.
- The main short-term problems you need to watch for are low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia).

WHAT ARE COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES?

- **Heart disease and stroke**
 - People with diabetes are 4 times more likely to suffer from a heart disease and stroke.
 - Heart disease and stroke are the most common causes of death in adults in this country.
- **Kidney disease**
 - The kidneys filter the waste products from the body. Diabetes can damage the tiny blood vessels and nerves in the kidneys.
 - Diabetics are 17 times more likely to have kidney disease that may lead to dialysis or kidney transplant.
- **Blindness**
 - High glucose levels damage the tiny blood vessels in the back of the eyes.
 - Diabetics are 25 times more likely to eye problems that may lead to blindness.
 - Every year up to 24,000 people go blind because of diabetes.
- **Nerve damage**
 - Diabetes can cause nerve damage (neuropathy) to any part of the body. This causes burning or stinging discomfort, numbness, coldness, difficulty using hands/feet, impotence and slowed digestion of food in the stomach.
 - Diabetics are 20 times more likely to have nerve damage and amputation of limbs
- **Dental disease**
 - Gum disease is common in diabetics. Can cause infection, pain/discomfort and loss of teeth.
- **Skin complications**
 - Diabetes can cause several types of skin problems, such as itching, blisters, and bacterial and fungus infections.

HOW CAN I PREVENT OR CONTROL DIABETES COMPLICATIONS?

By taking control of your diabetes. Learn all you can about diabetes. Early diagnosis of diabetes and daily blood glucose control is possible with good nutrition, daily physical activity, weight control, taking prescribed medication and self-blood glucose monitoring. Daily diabetes care means living a healthy lifestyle, often one that benefits the whole family.

- A1c level should be checked at least twice yearly, more often if you do not have good glucose control.
- Heart: your provider will check blood pressure at each office visit. Lipid levels should be checked every 6 months. This includes total cholesterol, LDL (bad), HDL (good) and triglycerides.

- Blood pressure: to lower blood pressure you should maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly, lower sodium in diet, limit alcohol intake, avoid/quit smoking and manage diabetes.
- Kidneys: Your provider will check your kidney function with a blood and/or urine test at least once a year.
- Eyes: you should have your eyes dilated and examined by an ophthalmologist at least once a year.
- Nerves: your provider should do a complete foot exam at least once a year and check your feet at each routine visit. You should examine your feet daily.
- Dental: Brush your teeth twice daily. Floss at least once daily. You should see the dentist at least every 6 months.
- Other: Diabetics should have a flu vaccine each year. A pneumonia vaccine is recommended for all diabetics. If you have complications from your diabetes, you may need a pneumonia booster. Discuss this with your health care provider.

WHAT NUMBERS DO I NEED TO KNOW TO AVOID COMPLICATIONS?

To decrease the change of diabetic complications, the following goals are recommended:

- Blood pressure below 130/90
- Cholesterol below 150mg/dL and triglycerides below 150mg/dL
- LDL-cholesterol (BAD) below 100mg/dL or below 70mg/dL for high risk patients.
- HDL-cholesterol (GOOD) above 40mg/dL in men and above 50mg/dL in women.
- Body mass index (BMI) below 25. (25-30 indicates overweight, >30 indicates obesity).
- A1c less or equal to 6.5 or 7%

Blood glucose levels for most diabetics are:

- Fasting (12 hours without eating/drinking): 80-130mg/dl.
 - For someone without diabetes this would be below 100mg/dL.
 - A fasting blood glucose between 100-125mg/dL indicates pre-diabetes.
- 1-2 hours after meal: less than 180mg/dl
- Before bedtime: about 100mg/dL

SMOKING

If you smoke, QUIT! Smoking hurts your lungs and your heart. It lowers the amount of oxygen that gets to your organs, raises your LDL (bad) cholesterol and raises blood pressure. All of these increase your risk of heart attack or stroke.