Don’t Let It Get Complicated

Diabetes complications include problems with your eyes, nerves, feet, kidneys, and cardiovascular system. In this issue, you will read more about these complications. Many of them can be treated, but it’s best to stop them from happening in the first place.

Preventing complications from diabetes

• Monitor your blood sugar as recommended by your provider and keep it under control.
• See your provider regularly. Get recommended tests and see a specialist if needed.
• Take medications as prescribed. Ask questions if you don’t understand the instructions.
• Eat a healthy diet. Don’t skip meals.
• Exercise as recommended by your provider.
• Check your feet daily. Look for cuts and sores.
• Practice good oral health. This helps prevent infections.
• Work to maintain your emotional health. Reducing stress can make diabetes seem more manageable, making you more likely to take care of yourself.
• Quit smoking. And certainly don’t start!

Don’t let diabetes complicate your life more than necessary. Start taking steps today to prevent problems later!

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic

Kidney Care

Your kidneys filter your blood, removing waste and extra fluid. Diabetes can damage the blood vessels in your kidneys, causing kidney disease or kidney failure. When your kidneys don’t work properly, they can no longer clean the waste from your blood. Luckily, there are ways to protect your kidneys.

• Keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and lipids under control.
• Eat a healthy diet. Work with a dietician to develop a meal plan.
• Follow your treatment plan and take medications as directed.
• Exercise as recommended by your provider.
• Don’t smoke.

You should also get your HbA1c level tested regularly. Your HbA1c level shows your average blood sugar over the past 2 – 3 months. This tells your provider how well your diabetes is controlled. The higher your HbA1c level, the higher your risk for complications from diabetes. Ask your provider what your target should be and work on a plan to meet and maintain that goal. Get tested regularly to make sure the plan is working.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Kidney Foundation
Keep track of your levels
Low blood sugar is called hypoglycemia. High blood sugar is called hyperglycemia. People with diabetes want to avoid both. Keeping track of your blood sugar helps make sure it’s where it should be. Check it first thing in the morning, before each meal, and before going to bed. Take your medications as prescribed and never make changes without talking to your provider first.

You should also stick with your meal and snack plan and know how to adjust it based on your needs. For example, if you increase your physical activity, you should increase the amount you eat throughout the day. Be careful not to be physically active on an empty stomach.

Recognize the symptoms
Learn how to recognize if your blood sugar gets too low or too high. If it’s low, you may get shaky, sweaty, lightheaded, sleepy, and weak. If it’s high, you may have trouble concentrating and have headaches. You may also get thirsty and need to urinate frequently. Knowing the signs and recording when they happen can help you avoid low/high blood sugar in the future.

Be prepared
Always carry the following with you:
1. Something that says you have diabetes in case of an emergency
2. Your glucometer (glucose meter) and supplies to check your blood sugar
3. Extra insulin (if you take it)
4. A healthy snack and water to help prevent low blood sugar
5. Glucose gel to take if your blood sugar does get too low

Stay healthy
Keeping track of your levels, knowing when there is a problem, and being prepared to deal with high or low blood sugar can go a long way in keeping your diabetes under control!

Your Medication Is a Must
Your provider may prescribe medication for your diabetes. You may be prescribed insulin, other injectable medication, oral medication, or a combination of these. Make sure you take medication as directed—if you don’t, it can’t keep your blood sugar under control. This can lead to problems with your vision, feet and legs, heart, and kidneys.

You also need to take your medication the right way. If you take insulin, take the right amount at the right time. Also be sure you are taking the right kind of insulin. It can be easy to mistakenly take a rapid-acting insulin instead of a long-acting one.

If you have questions about your medication and how to take it, ask your provider. Tell her how well the medication is working. It can be changed or adjusted based on your lifestyle and needs.

Is Seeing an Endocrinologist on Your Checklist?
Endocrinologists are providers who specialize in problems caused by hormonal imbalances. They work with people who have diabetes (which involves the hormone insulin). These specialists can help you monitor your blood sugar levels, prescribe medication, and teach you about diet and exercise. They can also help you create a treatment plan.

Your primary care provider may want you to see an endocrinologist if your diabetes is not well-controlled. You may also want to see this type of specialist if you have to go to the hospital due to your diabetes.

Source: Healthline
Heart Health

People with diabetes are at a high risk for cardiovascular disease (disease of the heart and/or blood vessels). One of these diseases, coronary artery disease (CAD), is among the leading causes of death for people with diabetes. It can lead to congestive heart failure (CHF) and angina. It can also cause a heart attack.

What is CAD?

CAD happens when the walls of the blood vessels leading to your heart harden or thicken. This narrows the vessels, making it harder for blood to get through. If blood vessels are too narrow or blocked, you may have a heart attack.

What is CHF?

CHF happens when your heart doesn’t pump blood as well as it should because it is too weak. It is a chronic condition.

Don’t Let Diabetes Sweep You off Your Feet

People with diabetes are at risk for foot problems caused by the damage diabetes does to nerves and blood vessels. Check your feet every day and talk to your provider about any issues you notice.

If you cut or injure your foot, you may not feel it because of nerve damage. If that happens and it goes untreated, it could get worse. Cuts or sores that fail to heal can become infected and turn into ulcers. If these aren't treated, skin and other tissue can die. If enough tissue dies, amputation may be necessary.

If you see a cut or sore on your feet (you might not feel it), talk to your provider. Early treatment can prevent infection. Calluses and corns are common in people with diabetes and can also lead to foot ulcers. Do not try to cut or remove a callus or corn yourself. Have your provider do it.

Just as important as seeing your provider is doing what you can to prevent problems.

1. Monitor and keep your blood sugar under control.
2. Check your feet every day. Use a mirror to check the bottoms of your feet.
3. Wash your feet every day. Dry your feet completely, making sure to dry between your toes.
4. Put lotion on your feet to prevent the skin from cracking. Do not put it between your toes. Do talk to your provider about what kind of lotion to use.

Don’t drag your feet! Start doing what you can to keep your feet healthy today!

Sources: American Diabetes Association, WebMD

What is angina?

Angina is caused by reduced blood flow to the heart. It causes chest pains that may go away when you rest or take angina medicine. Angina does not cause permanent heart damage, but it does increase your chance of having a heart attack. Talk to your provider about any chest pain you have.

What can you do?

Talk with your provider and come up with a healthy diet and exercise plan. Work to keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol in check. And don't smoke!

Sources: American Diabetes Association, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Treat Your Eyesight Right

High blood sugar can lead to eye and vision problems. This means you need to take especially good care of your eyes. Glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy are 3 common diseases of the eyes in people with diabetes. If left untreated, all 3 can cause vision problems and, potentially, blindness. Because of this, yearly dilated eye exams are important, even if you don’t have symptoms. Exams can spot problems early, so treatment can start as soon as possible. Keeping your blood sugar and blood pressure under control will also help protect your eyes. Tobacco use can also affect your eyesight. If you’d like support to help quit, you can call Quit Partner at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). TTY users call 1-877-777-6534. These calls are free. Or, sign up on their website at www.QuitPartnerMN.com.

Sources: American Diabetes Association, American Optometric Association, Healthline, WebMD
Health and wellness or prevention information

Note: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider’s advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.
1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

Attention: Si vous avez besoin d’une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

โปรดดูที่. พุทธะท่านช่วยส่งข้อมูลที่ต่อไปนี้ในการแปลเอกสารมีค่า, จึง
ให้ใช้ฟิชยาแล้กอุตสาหกิจ.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenne abilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la’aan ah ee tarjumaadda (afcelinta) qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỗ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.
Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. PrimeWest Health does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

Auxiliary Aids and Services: PrimeWest Health provides auxiliary aids and services, like qualified interpreters or information in accessible formats, free of charge and in a timely manner to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in our health care programs. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

Language Assistance Services: PrimeWest Health provides translated documents and spoken language interpreting, free of charge and in a timely manner, when language assistance services are necessary to ensure limited English speakers have meaningful access to our information and services. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

Civil Rights Complaints

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You may contact any of the following four agencies directly to file a discrimination complaint.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion (in some cases)
Contact the **OCR** directly to file a complaint:
Director
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 515F
HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019
TDD 800-537-7697
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

**Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)**
In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:
- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the **MDHR** directly to file a complaint:
Minnesota Department of Human Rights
540 Fairview Avenue North
Suite 201
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)
651-296-9042 (fax)
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us (email)

**Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)**
You have the right to file a complaint with DHS if you believe you have been discriminated against in our health care programs because of any of the following:
- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

Complaints must be in writing and filed within 180 days of the date you discovered the alleged discrimination. The complaint must contain your name and address and describe the discrimination you are complaining about. After we get your complaint, we will review it and notify you in writing about whether we have authority to investigate. If we do, we will investigate the complaint.
DHS will notify you in writing of the investigation’s outcome. You have the right to appeal the outcome if you disagree with the decision. To appeal, you must send a written request to have DHS review the investigation outcome. Be brief and state why you disagree with the decision. Include additional information you think is important.

If you file a complaint in this way, the people who work for the agency named in the complaint cannot retaliate against you. This means they cannot punish you in any way for filing a complaint. Filing a complaint in this way does not stop you from seeking out other legal or administrative actions.

Contact DHS directly to file a discrimination complaint:
Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

PrimeWest Health Complaint Notice
You have the right to file a complaint with PrimeWest Health if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information
- disability (including mental or physical impairment)
- marital status
- age
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- sexual orientation
- national origin
- race
- color
- religion
- creed
- public assistance status
- political beliefs

You can file a complaint and ask for help in filing a complaint in person or by mail, phone, fax, or email at:
Rebecca Fuller
Civil Rights Coordinator
PrimeWest Health
3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308
Toll Free: 1-866-431-0801
TTY: 1-800-627-3529 or 711
Fax: 1-320-762-8750
Email: rebecca.fuller@primewest.org

American Indian Health Statement
American Indians can continue or begin to use tribal and Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics. We will not require prior approval or impose any conditions for you to get services at these clinics. For elders age 65 years and older this includes Elderly Waiver (EW) services accessed through the tribe. If a doctor or other provider in a tribal or IHS clinic refers you to a provider in our network, we will not require you to see your primary care provider prior to the referral.