INFORM Yourself

Summer DIABETES

Avoiding the DANGERS of Diabetes

This newsletter is full of things you can do to help manage your diabetes. It can all seem like a lot of work, but the payoff makes it worth it. Making changes and establishing healthy habits can help prevent diabetes complications, including the following:

- Vision problems or blindness
- Foot injuries (which could lead to amputation)
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Sexual dysfunction

- Numbness, tingling, and nerve pain
- Kidney damage (which could require dialysis or a kidney transplant)
- Depression

Remember that complications can be prevented by following your treatment plan and working closely with your provider. It’s not always easy, but it is always worth it!

Source: MedlinePlus, A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia

Why Exercise?

Get in shape! Lose weight! Chances are you’ve heard this before, and chances are you know it’s much easier said than done! If you have diabetes, however, following this advice is especially important. When you exercise, you turn fat into muscle, and muscle is better at using sugar than fat. This means that if you have more muscle, your body will be able to process and use glucose more efficiently. This helps control your blood sugar levels.

Be sure to talk to your provider before you start an exercise or weight loss plan. Exercise can cause your blood sugar to drop, sometimes to an unsafe level. This is especially true if you take certain diabetes medications or insulin. Your provider can help you adjust your treatment plan so you can exercise safely and enjoy its many benefits. Along with exercise, dietary changes can help you get to a healthy weight. If needed, your provider can also refer you to a nutritionist or licensed dietician. These specialists can teach you how to eat healthy when you have diabetes.
Diabetes and Depression
People with diabetes have a higher risk of developing depression than others. Managing the disease can be stressful and take an emotional toll that can cause depression. And if you do have depression, it can alter the way you think. This makes it hard to focus on taking good care of yourself. Depression can also lead to unhealthy habits like smoking, problems with drug or alcohol use, and poor eating. Poor self-care and unhealthy habits all negatively affect diabetes management. In short, diabetes and depression can become a vicious cycle. Talk about your risk of depression with your provider. You can work as a team to recognize signs you may be depressed. Knowing the signs can help you identify depression early. And when it’s found early, it can be treated before the cycle ever starts.

Work—and Communicate—with Your Provider
Seeing your health care provider every 3 – 6 months is important when it comes to managing your diabetes. Your provider will perform an exam, check your weight and blood pressure, and order lab tests. There are 2 common tests used to check your blood sugar control. They are a fasting blood sugar test and a hemoglobin A1C (HbA1c) test. Your fasting blood sugar tells you how high your blood sugar is after not eating for at least 8 hours. Your HbA1c shows your average blood sugar control over the past 2 – 3 months. Your provider may also order tests to check your kidney function. This is because, over time, diabetes can cause kidney damage. Your provider will also talk about how diabetes can affect your eyes. To prevent problems, they will explain why it’s important to get regular retinal eye exams performed by an eye care professional.

Health care visits also give you a chance to talk to your provider. A relationship based on honest communication is key to managing your diabetes and maintaining or improving your quality of life. Tell your provider about your symptoms and any parts of your treatment plan you are having a hard time following. Talking honestly with your provider ensures you are both on the same page. This allows you to work together to create a treatment plan based on your needs and preferences.

Quick Tips
In addition to exercise (see the article on the cover), the following are some quick tips that can help you manage your diabetes.

Don’t smoke. Smoking greatly increases your risk of heart disease and circulatory problems! If you smoke, talk to your provider and make a plan to quit.

Be careful how much caffeine and artificial sweeteners you consume. Research shows that caffeine may raise blood sugar levels, and the long-term effects of artificial sweeteners used in drinks like diet soda pop aren’t clear. As with all things, it’s best to consume caffeinated and artificially sweetened drinks in moderation. Try switching out soda pop for water (plain or infused with things like strawberries, lemon, ginger, or mint). You can also try low-fat milk and fruit and vegetable juices (with no added sugar).

Eat breakfast. It really is the most important meal of the day, especially for people with diabetes! Skipping breakfast can cause spikes in your blood sugar, even if you don’t overeat at lunch or supper.

A good breakfast rich in protein, healthy fats, and carbohydrates helps stabilize your blood sugar throughout the day.

Learn to manage stress. Stress is a part of everyday life, but high levels of stress are bad for your health. Stress hormones can affect your blood sugar levels, and continued stress may lead to unhealthy coping habits, like smoking or drinking, that can make your diabetes worse. Talk to your provider about managing stress in a healthy way. Stress management techniques, such as breathing exercises, exercise, meditation, and talking with someone you trust, can be included in your treatment plan.

Get enough sleep. Over time, not getting enough sleep can lead to a state of chronic stress. In turn, this leads to an increased release of stress hormones and elevated blood sugar levels. In general, adults should get 6 – 8 hours of sleep every night.
Good Health for You and Your Caregivers
Managing life with diabetes can be challenging, but you don’t have to manage it alone. Chances are, many of your friends and family members would like to help with your care—they just might not know how. The best way to fix this is by letting them know what you need and what kind of help you are comfortable with. Having this conversation takes the pressure of “not knowing” off family and friends by giving them specific things to do. And it gives you a sense of certainty about what kind of help you can count on.

Keep in mind that while caregiving can be very rewarding, it can also be stressful. Caregivers often become less concerned about their own needs as they focus on the needs of another. If you notice your caregivers seem stressed, let them know you’re concerned about their good health. Suggest they take a break or attend a caregiver support group. Your local Social/Human/Family Services agency is a good source of information about these groups. There are also many online resources for caregivers, including online support groups, trainings, videos, and blogs. The website of the Caregiver Action Network (CAN) has several of these features. You can find it at [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org).

Caregivers can provide you with invaluable support. Return the favor by letting them know their health and well-being are important to you!

Seek Help for Problems with Substance Use
Drinking too much alcohol and abusing drugs (using illegal drugs or using legal drugs in a harmful way) is dangerous for everyone. It is especially dangerous when you have diabetes.

Many alcoholic drinks have a lot of carbohydrates, which can cause your blood sugar to rise quickly. The rise may be followed by very low blood sugar. This is because your liver is too “busy” breaking down the alcohol to release sugar. Both high and low blood sugar can be dangerous and can lead to coma or death. Another concern with alcohol is that the symptoms of having too much to drink can be similar to those of low blood sugar. Because of this, you may not be able to identify the problem and may not get the right care in a timely manner. Over time, drinking too much can worsen some of the common complications of diabetes. These include nerve pain, vision problems, and high blood pressure.

Using drugs in the wrong way can alter how well diabetes medications work. This can lead to dangerous blood sugar levels that can have serious, even fatal, consequences. This type of drug use can also affect your thinking and memory. This can make it hard to remember to eat properly and take your medications. Forgetting either or both of these can be life-threatening.

If you think you may have a problem, talk to your provider. Be open and honest. Conversations with your provider are kept private and can be the first step to improving your diabetes management, overall health, and safety.

Source: Coalition Against Drug Abuse

Monitoring Your Blood Sugar at Home
Your provider may recommend that you test your blood sugar level at home using a blood sugar monitor (glucometer). This may sound daunting, but you’ll have help! Your provider or diabetes educator can teach you how to check your level. And, your treatment plan will tell you how often you should check your level and what to do based on the result. Remember to keep a log of your results. Include the date, time, reading, and whether you were fasting. Bring the log to all your health care appointments.

If you have a smart phone, you can also use an app to help with blood sugar monitoring. You can find a list of several helpful apps at [www.healthline.com/health/diabetes/top-iphone-android-apps](http://www.healthline.com/health/diabetes/top-iphone-android-apps). They can help you track your food, insulin doses, blood sugar readings, and more. Read through the app descriptions, talk with your provider, and see if any of them may be helpful. Please note that not all the apps listed at the site above are free and some have fees for extra features.

©Photographee.eu/Adobe Stock
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.
Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

Mلاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

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.

โปรดทราบ. ทุกคนที่ถูกส่งทักแนวทางดุยตื้อในวางแผนแปลงสมาชิบ์ให้, จึงให้ใช้ที่จิตฆ่าเล็กๆน้อยๆ.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentii kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kennname bilbili.

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 (afeelinta) 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 đỡ 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.