

The ABC's of Diabetes



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Diabetes is no sweet deal. High blood sugar can lead to a myriad of health problems, from kidney disease and stroke to neuropathy and glaucoma. To lower your risk of these serious health conditions, follow these quick tips to manage your diabetes:

Ace your A1c

If you have diabetes, a hemoglobin A1c test will give you a snapshot of how well you have managed your blood sugar over the last three months. The hemoglobin A1c gives you a more comprehensive look at your condition than a regular blood glucose test, as it shows your average glucose level over time. It is recommended that you receive an A1c test twice a year. For many people, the goal will be an A1C level below 7.

Bring down your BMI

By dropping excess weight and lowering your BMI, you lower your risk for complications associated with diabetes. Maintaining a healthy weight also serves to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, which play into your risk for stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease. Additionally, regular exercise helps your body to use insulin properly to better naturally manage your blood glucose levels.

Check in with your doctor

Certain screenings, such as eye exams and foot exams, should be done on a regular basis to ensure early detection of any emerging complications. In addition to your semi-annual A1c test, the National Diabetes Education Program recommends that you receive the following once per year:

- Dental exam to check teeth and gums
- Flu shot
- Urine and blood test to check for kidney problems
- Physical exam (including cholesterol and triglycerides tests)
- Comprehensive foot exam
- Dilated eye exam

What is Prediabetes?

Prediabetes means that you have blood glucose levels higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as a diabetic. However, you are at a higher risk for developing Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Just because you have prediabetes does not mean that you will develop diabetes. Making small lifestyle changes now can drastically reduce the likelihood of developing diabetes in the future. By losing 7-8% of your body weight, you can cut down on your risk by more than half. For someone weighing 200 pounds, this means losing just 15 pounds. Start by engaging in moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking) for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week and eating a diet full of fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.

To find out if you are at risk for developing diabetes or prediabetes, take the Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test at: www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/diabetes-risk-test/

