

Diabetes Care and Precautions

Diabetes can affect many parts of the body, and can lead to serious problems such as heart disease, blindness, kidney damage, and lower-limb amputations. People with diabetes can reduce these risks with the help of their doctors, families, and caregivers. This means controlling the levels of blood glucose (blood sugar), blood pressure, and blood lipids (cholesterol), and receiving regular preventive care.

Older people with poor control of blood sugar levels often have problems with thinking, depression, and other disabilities. If you are caring for an older person who has diabetes, be sure they see the doctor on a regular basis to be evaluated. Good diabetes care can help reduce the risk of complications.

Blood Sugar—Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy. In order to keep the amount of blood sugar in the blood from becoming too high, people with diabetes take supplemental insulin in pill form, by pump, inhaled or by injection. Caregivers are often responsible for blood sugar testing.

Insulin Shock—Blood sugar levels can also become too low from giving too much insulin or from poor diet, resulting in a serious condition called insulin shock or hypoglycemia. Signs include: shaking, nervousness, feeling faint, or even passing out. Call 911 immediately if the person faints and is unresponsive.

Blood Pressure and Cholesterol—People with diabetes are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Lowering blood pressure and cholesterol through better diet and medication can help limit this risk. Lowering blood pressure also reduces stress on the kidneys.

Weight Control and Exercise—Eating regular, balanced meals that include carefully measured portions can help keep diabetes under control. Caregivers should limit the amount of candy, cookies, and other desserts given to someone with diabetes. Always read food labels for hidden sugars in unexpected places such as crackers, bread crumbs, and ketchup. Sometimes, simple measures such as watching the diet, losing weight, and increasing exercise can bring diabetes under control.

Eye Care—People with diabetes should see the eye doctor regularly. Laser therapy can reduce the possibility of severe vision loss caused by diabetes.

Signs of Diabetes

Some people with diabetes have *no* symptoms until they find out from a routine blood test.

Some symptoms—

- feeling very thirsty
- urinating often
- feeling very hungry or tired
- losing weight without dieting
- sores that heal slowly
- dry, itchy skin
- pain, tingling or loss of feeling in the feet
- blurry vision

Inspiration Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.

Homecare currently serves 14 families and employs 11 caregivers. Several of our clients have recently moved from their homes into assisted living apartments. They do not look forward to this transition but with the help of our caregivers the move becomes easier. Sometimes the caregiver continues providing aid in the new facility. Usually the client ends up being happy with their new surroundings and enjoys the daily contact with others living/working in the facility. Happy Easter!