

## Managing Diabetes

Millions of people around the world have been diagnosed with diabetes or know someone living with diabetes. There are two types of diabetes and while neither is a curable disease as yet, diabetes is a very manageable disease. It can be frightening, annoying and frustrating but people who learn the facts are well on their way to being able to manage it and can go on to live a long, health and happy life.

The majority of diabetics have Type 2 diabetes, but an important minority have Type 1. Type 1 diabetes is often mistakenly thought of as a childhood disease. However, according to the American Diabetic Association, it is estimated that half of all new Type 1 diagnoses develop after the age of 20. Today, people of all ages with Type 1 diabetes, who are managing their disease, are living longer, healthier lives than ever before.

Our body uses the food we eat and breaks down the carbohydrates into blood glucose or blood sugar. Insulin is a hormone that the body needs to get the glucose from the bloodstream into the cells of the body, which is then used for energy.

In Type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin at all and therefore the body is unable to break down carbohydrates and produce the energy needed to live. If you have Type 2 diabetes your body does not use insulin properly. This is called insulin resistance. At first, your pancreas makes extra insulin to make up for it. But, over time it isn't able to keep up and can't make enough insulin to keep your blood glucose at normal levels.

When glucose builds up in the blood instead of going into cells, it can cause two problems:

- 1) Right away, your cells will be starved for energy.
- 2) Over time, high blood glucose levels may hurt your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart.

However, you can lead a healthy life with Diabetes. Managing your diabetes is the key to lowering your risks of having a heart attack, stroke or other diabetes related health problems.

To start, you should know the ABCs of diabetes. Here's what the **ABC** stand for:

- A is for A1C test

The A1C Test (Short for hemoglobin A1C) - This is a blood test that done at your doctor's office. It shows what your blood glucose (blood sugar) has been over the last three months. It lets you and your doctor know if your blood sugar is under control. The A1C

goal for many people is below 7. Check with your doctor what your levels should be and how often you need to get this done.

- **B is for Blood Pressure**

The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 140/90. It may be different for you. The higher your blood pressure, the harder your heart has to work. Ask your doctor what your goal should be. Make sure to have your blood pressure measured at every doctor's visit.

- **C is for Cholesterol**

Your cholesterol numbers tell you about the amount of fat in your body. There are two kinds of cholesterol in your blood. LDL or "bad" cholesterol can build up and clog your arteries. This can cause a heart attack or a stroke. HDL or "good" cholesterol help protect your heart by removing bad cholesterol from your arteries. Ask your doctor what your cholesterol numbers should be.

Talk to your doctor about how to best monitor and manage your **A1C** (blood glucose or sugar), **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol levels to help manage your diabetes.

The treatment for Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes differs. Type 1 treatment includes diet measuring, blood sugar monitoring and injections of insulin. With the help of insulin therapy and other treatments, even young children and seniors can learn to manage their condition and live long, healthy lives.

With Type 2, people can control their blood glucose with healthy eating and being active. But, the doctor may need to also prescribe oral medications or insulin to help you meet and maintain your target blood glucose levels.

Diabetes is a common disease, yet every individual needs unique care. Some of the actions you can take to lower your risk of diabetes complications include:

- Get Active - Move more every day
- Eat a Healthy Diet - Eat less fat, sugar and salt
- Breathe Healthy - Stop Smoking
- Weight Control - Stay at a healthy weight
- Relax and Refresh - Reduce stress
- Medication Compliance - Take your medications as prescribed

All people with diabetes of either Type, or their families, should be encouraged to learn as much as possible about the latest medical therapies and approaches, as well as healthy lifestyle choices in regards to diabetes. It's a good idea to discuss the different options available with your Personal Care Doctor at your next visit so they can direct you into the care option that is right for you. Or better yet, schedule a visit now to discuss this issue and get on the road to treatment so that you can live a healthier, happier life style beginning now!