WELCOA
HEALTH BULLETINS

ToYourHealth

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

MANAGING DIABETES FOR LIFE

Each year, 1.7 million Americans, ages 20 and up, are diagnosed with diabetes. People with diabetes have high levels of blood glucose (also called blood sugar). If left undiagnosed or untreated, diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, and other health problems. That's why it's important to manage your diabetes ABCs: A1C (blood glucose), blood pressure, and cholesterol. The following 4 steps are a good start.

Step 1: Learn about diabetes.

There are three main types of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes – Your body does not make insulin. This is a problem because you need insulin to take the sugar (glucose) from the foods you eat and turn it into energy for your body. You need to take insulin every day to live.

Type 2 diabetes – Your body does not make or use insulin well. You may need to take pills or insulin to help control your diabetes. Type 2 is the most common type of diabetes.

Gestational (jest-TAY-shun-al) diabetes – Some women get this kind of diabetes when they are pregnant. Most of the time, it goes away after the baby is born. But even if it goes away, these women and their children have a greater chance of getting diabetes later in life.

If you've got diabetes, you need to make healthy food choices, move more every day, stay at a healthy weight, and take recommended medicines even when you feel good.

Step 2: Talk to your health care team about how to manage your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Know your ABC goals, and track your progress.

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Step 3: Learn how to live with diabetes. You may have heard people say they have "a touch of diabetes" or that their "sugar is a little high." These words suggest that diabetes is not a serious disease. That is not correct. Diabetes is serious, but you can learn to manage it.

People with diabetes need to make healthy food choices, stay at a healthy weight, move more every day, and take their medicine even when they feel good. It's a lot to do. It's not easy, but it's worth it!

It is common to feel overwhelmed, sad, or angry when you are living with diabetes. You may know the steps you should take to stay healthy, but have trouble sticking with your plan over time. This section has tips on how to cope with your diabetes, eat well, and be active.

Cope with your diabetes.

Stress can raise your blood sugar. Learn ways to lower your stress. Try deep breathing, gardening, taking a walk, meditating, working on your hobby, or listening to your favorite music.

Ask for help if you feel down. A mental health counselor, support group, member of the clergy, friend, or family member who will listen to your concerns may help you feel better.

EAT WELL.

» Make a diabetes meal plan with help from your health care team.

» Choose foods that are lower in calories, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and salt.

» Eat foods with more fiber, such as whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta.

» Choose foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, bread and cereals, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese.

» Drink water instead of juice and regular soda.

BE ACTIVE.

» Set a goal to be more active most days of the week. Start slow by taking 10 minute walks, 3 times a day.

» Twice a week, work to increase your muscle strength. Use stretch bands, do yoga, heavy gardening (digging and planting with tools), or try push-ups.

» Stay at or get to a healthy weight by using your meal plan and moving more.

Step 4: Get routine care to stay healthy. See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early. Once each year, be sure to get a dilated eye exam and a complete foot exam.