

# Living Healthy with **DIABETES**

2nd Quarter 2005  
For BlueCare® and  
TennCare<sup>SM</sup> Select Members



## Three Ways to Keep Your Blood Sugar Balanced

When you have diabetes, you need to take good care of yourself. If you don't, you could have many health problems.

Uncontrolled, diabetes can cause blindness, kidney and nerve damage, heart attack or impotence. It could cause you to lose a foot or even kill you.

To stay healthy, you need to keep your blood sugar levels from getting too high or too low. The best way to make sure your levels

are OK is to check them often or as your doctor has told you.

You can help balance your blood sugar levels by following all three of these diabetes care tips:

**1. Eat right.** Eating healthy food will help keep your blood sugar steady. You need to eat at least three meals each day. Eat healthy foods that are low in fat, sugar and salt. Try fruits, vegetables, pasta, grains, low-fat milk and cheese. Cook your

food by baking, boiling or steaming instead of frying.

**2. Exercise.** Staying active can help control your blood sugar. It will also help your heart work better. You should exercise a little bit each day. Check your blood sugar before you exercise. If it's low, you may need to eat a snack first. If you haven't exercised in a long time, talk to your doctor first.

**3. Take your medicine.** If you need medicine to help control

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## Testing Important in Diabetes Care



Caring for diabetes means keeping blood sugar levels under control. Medicines, exercise and eating well can all help. But these simple tests can also help:

- Urine test to monitor nephropathy
- A1C test to tell you your blood sugar level
- LDL cholesterol test
- Retinal or dilated eye exam

If your levels from these tests are not within target, your doctor can help you with changes to reach your goal.

## Save Your Sight With Special Eye Care



As a diabetic, your eyes need special care. Diabetes can cause eye problems. The main one is retinopathy, which can lead to blindness.

An eye doctor can help you keep your eyes as healthy as possible. See an eye doctor as often as he or she suggests. And let your doctor know if you notice any problems with your eyes, such as pain or trouble seeing clearly.

Besides seeing an eye doctor, you can do other things to avoid eye problems. Control your blood glucose levels. Bring high blood pressure under control. And if you smoke, stop.

## Check Health Information Library

You can listen to 10 different recorded messages about diabetes. Just call the Health Information Library. The number is 1-800-999-1658. The recorded messages are available 24 hours a day. Press the 1 key on your touch-tone phone, and then follow directions. Codes for diabetes subjects are 4391 through 4400.

## *Danger of Heart Attack Higher for Diabetics*

Maybe your doctor has told you that you are at high risk for heart disease. Or, maybe you already have had a heart attack. Having diabetes means that you are much more likely to have a heart attack. Did you know that more than 80 percent of people with diabetes die of some form of heart or blood vessel disease?

The good news is that you can take steps to prevent heart disease or reduce your chances of having another heart attack. Lifestyle changes – such as choosing foods wisely, being physically active, and taking medication – can help. If you smoke, get help to quit. Every step you take will help.

### **Signs of a heart attack:**

- Uncomfortable squeezing, heaviness or pressure sensation in the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back.
- Chest pain that also goes to the arms, shoulders, back, neck, jaw or elbows.
- Chest pain with sweating, nausea, shortness of breath, lightheadedness or fainting.
- New chest pain in a person who has already had a heart attack.
- Sudden beginning of confusion, dizziness or extreme weakness.
- Pain or shortness of breath with indigestion after a large meal.
- Chest pain with use of cocaine, methamphetamines or other drugs.

# Lose Weight or Take Steps to Prevent Weight Gain



People with diabetes should exercise routinely. Exercise plays an important role in regulating blood sugar.

Before you start a new routine, check with your health care team to find out which activities will be safe for you. Then think about how you can add more activity to your routine. If you're just starting out, begin with 5 minutes a day and gradually add more time. Then work up to doing a total of about 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, most days of the week.

Be sure to wear proper shoes, socks and clothing while exercising to avoid blisters or chafing. Blisters and chafing can cause infection.

## Exercise:

- Helps the body use insulin more efficiently.
- Prevents or reduces complications and risks related to diabetes.
- Helps build muscles, which can burn fat faster and control blood sugar.
- Helps with weight control.
- Raises the good cholesterol called HDL (high-density lipoprotein).
- Improves the ability to do everyday tasks.
- Helps reduce stress and enhance the sense of well-being.

## Tips for Treats

For breakfast, modest amounts – about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup – of presweetened cereals are OK. And a tablespoon of maple syrup on pancakes is fine.

Mix your own smoothies in a blender using fresh fruit, unsweetened pineapple juice and fat-free vanilla ice cream. Or for another cool snack, put a single layer of whole strawberries, seedless grapes or melon pieces on a baking sheet. Then freeze until firm.



For dessert after dinner, buy plain, low-fat yogurt. Then flavor it with a puree of berries.

## Resources

American Diabetes Association  
1-800-342-2383  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

American Dietetic Association  
1-800-366-1655  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse  
1-301-654-3327  
[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

American Association of Diabetes Educators  
1-800-TEAM-UP-4 (1-800-832-6874)  
[www.aadenet.org](http://www.aadenet.org)



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your diabetes, take it regularly.  
Ask your doctor about when  
and how to take your medicine.

### Diabetes Checklist

- Check my glucose.
- Eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables.
- Be active for at least 20 minutes.
- Take my medicine.
- Check my feet.
- Have my eyes checked.

Para información acerca de TennCare<sup>SM</sup> en español llame al 1-866-311-4290. For information about interpretation and translation services, which are free to the enrollee, BlueCare members call 1-800-468-9698. TennCare<sup>SM</sup> Select members call 1-800-263-5479.

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