

Title: Diabetes: Taking Care of Yourself

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Abstract: General information regarding type 2 diabetes care in a primary care setting including information regarding associated triopathy, eating habits, blood sugar information, what to expect at the doctor's visit, and when to call the doctor.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

Diabetes:

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when a person's body does not make enough insulin or use insulin in the correct way.

Impairment results in high blood glucose or sugar, medically called *hyperglycemia*.

Health Problems?

Eyes:

- Blurred or worsening vision.
- Specks “floating”.

Kidneys:

- Foamy appearance or excessive frothing of the urine.
- Unintentional weight gain (from fluid accumulation).
- Edema or swelling around the eyes or lower legs.

Nerves:

- Loss of feeling or numbness/tingling in feet and legs.
- Problems with digestion.
- Impotence.

How can I stay healthy by eating?

Eat right!

- Eat at the same time daily.
- Try to eat 3 meals every day. Have a small snack at bedtime if you are taking medications otherwise avoid snacks.
- Eat plenty of fiber including green leafy vegetables, whole grains, and fresh fruit.
- Limit amount of “empty” calories such as alcohol, fat, and sugars.

Blood sugar and how do I check it?

- To check your blood sugar you will need to prick your finger to get one drop of blood using a spring-loaded device.
- You insert a strip into your meter and then you place the drop of blood onto the strip. The meter should flash or beep (model dependent) and will display the level.
- Record this number in your *Blood Sugar Daily Log*.

When should I call my Doctor?

- You feel uncoordinated.
- You start to feel dizzy, weak, confused, or begin to tremble.
- You feel nauseated and vomit more than once.
- You feel greater thirst than normal and are urinating more frequently.
- You are breathing deeper and faster for no reason.
- Your breath smells sweet.
- You are out of medication refills at the pharmacy.

What to expect at my Doctor's visit?

- Blood draw for a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test showing the average sugar level over the past 90 days.
- Analysis of the *Sugar Log* discussing trends, lows (hypoglycemia), and highs.
- Discussion of dietary and exercising habits.
- Adjustments of medications, if needed.
- General discussion of your role and feelings regarding your control of diabetes.

Diabetes: Taking care of yourself

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