

Living Well

New perspectives on diabetes self-care

Keep your eyes on your feet!

Taking care of your eyes and feet is important for people with diabetes. High blood sugar for a long time can be bad for your eyes and feet.

High blood sugar can:

- Damage parts of your eyes so it is hard to see
- Make your legs and feet feel numb or have shooting pain, burning, or pins and needles



Know about diabetes eye problems...

Take this quiz!

	True	False	Not sure
1 If you have diabetes, you have a greater chance of getting some eye problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 There are always early signs of eye problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 You should get an eye exam every year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 Damage to blood vessels in the eye can cause problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 If you have diabetes, you don't have to worry about glaucoma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6 Laser treatment can stop damaged blood vessels from getting worse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7 Your pupils should be dilated during an eye exam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 Lots of people with diabetes have cataracts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9 Good diabetes control stops your chance of eye problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10 You can lower the chance of going blind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Find out the answers on the back of this newsletter ►

Wear the right shoes!

Because diabetes can cause foot problems, you should choose shoes that fit your feet.

Here are some Dos and Don'ts for getting the right shoes:



Do wear athletic or walking shoes for everyday use.

Do wear shoes or slippers to keep your feet safe.

Do always wear socks so you won't get blisters.

Do make sure shoes fit if your feet have changed shape.

Do shop for shoes at the end of the day when your feet are bigger.

Do break in new shoes slowly. Wear them only 1-2 hours a day for the first week or two.

Don't wear shoes that don't fit right.

Don't get shoes that don't support your feet.

Don't choose shoes that don't match the shape of your feet.

Don't wear pointed-toe shoes.

Don't wear high heels.

Don't wear knee-high socks that are too tight below the knee.

And make sure your doctor checks your feet at every visit!

Know about eye problems...

Answers to the quiz

- 1 True — Over time, the chance grows that people with diabetes will have eye problems.
- 2 False— Often there are no early signs of eye problems.
- 3 True — You should get at least 1 eye exam a year.
- 4 True — Damaged blood vessels in the eye may swell or leak.
- 5 False— People with diabetes are much more likely to get glaucoma.
- 6 True — Laser treatment can help keep some eye problems from getting worse.
- 7 True — Dilated pupils allow the doctor to see better inside your eye.
- 8 True — People with diabetes are much more likely to get cataracts.
- 9 False— Good diabetes control can't always stop eye problems, but it can slow them down.
- 10 True — The chance of blindness can be lowered if you find and treat problems early.

How did you do?

This newsletter is provided as part of your health care benefits. It does not contain all the information that you may need to know about this topic, and it cannot be used to diagnose your condition or illness or serve as a substitute for medical treatment. Be sure to discuss any questions you may have with your doctor.

Nerve damage and skin problems

With diabetes, you can have nerve damage

Having high blood sugar for a long time can damage your nerves and lead to a number of problems.



Nerve damage in your feet and hands may cause:

- Tingling
- Pain
- Numbness
- Weakness

Nerve damage in other parts of the body may cause:

- Bladder problems
- Problems with sexual function
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Too much or too little sweating
- Throwing up, diarrhea, or constipation
- Feeling full or sick to your stomach

Skin problems are more common for people with diabetes

Some of the skin problems include:

- Itchy skin
- Styes on eyelids
- Boils or infections at hair roots
- Infections deep under the skin or at nails
- Jock itch, athlete's foot, ringworm, and vaginal infections



Things you can do to help avoid nerve damage and skin problems

- Control your blood sugar
- Limit how much alcohol you drink
- Keep skin clean and dry
- Don't take very hot baths and showers
- Keep your home more humid in cold, dry weather
- Do not smoke
- Take care of your feet
- Treat cuts right away
- Don't let your skin get dry

It is good to catch problems early.

Tell your doctor if you have any signs of nerve damage and skin problems.

Eye care for people with diabetes

People with diabetes are more likely to get:

- Gradual vision loss (glaucoma)
- Cloudy eye lenses (cataracts)
- Damaged eye blood vessels (diabetic retinopathy)

Diabetes causes most new cases of blindness in adults every year. Most of the time, there are no early warning signs.

You can help avoid eye problems and blindness:

- Tightly control your blood sugar
- Control high blood pressure
- Stop smoking
- See your eye doctor (ophthalmologist) for an eye exam at least once each year

Call your eye doctor if you:

- Have blurry vision or trouble reading
- Have eye redness that won't go away
- See spots or floaters
- See double
- See straight lines that don't look straight
- Have eye pain or pressure
- Can't see things at the side of your eyes

**Eye problems can be treated by an eye doctor.
But you also have a lot of control over what happens to your eyes.**

Normal Vision



Damaged Vision



Smoking and your health

**When you have diabetes, it is very important to take care of yourself.
You may be healthier if you stop smoking.**

When you smoke:

- You may get cancer
- Your chance of a stroke or heart attack goes up
- Your chance of dying from heart disease or stroke goes up
- Your blood pressure may go up
- Your nerves and kidneys may be damaged
- Foot ulcers may get worse and lead to leg and foot infections
- Your sex life may be affected

When you stop smoking:

- Your health will improve
- You may add years to your life

If you can stop for 15 years, your chance of heart disease is like someone who never smoked at all!

**Quit smoking...
and stick with it!**



Stopping smoking is not easy.
Here are some things that can help:

- Know when and why you smoke
- Find another way to relax
- Get exercise
- Keep your hands busy, with beads or a pen
- Reward yourself when you stick to it
- Ask family and friends to help
- Set a date to quit

And talk with your doctor about treatments that can help you stop smoking... for good!

Type 2 diabetes action plan

Name _____ Date _____

Doctor _____ Phone _____

Meeting your diabetes goals can be as easy as 1-2-3! Work with your doctor to fill out this form to help set goals that are right for you.

1 Know your goals

A1C (3 month average): _____

Daily blood sugar number when I wake up and before meals: _____ to _____

Daily blood sugar reading after a meal: _____

Blood pressure: _____ Cholesterol: _____

Weight: _____ Other: _____

2 Take action to meet your goals

- Test your blood sugar daily
- Take your medicines the way your doctor tells you
- Eat healthy foods and follow your meal plan
- Be more active
- Check your feet daily
- Get all the exams your doctor tells you
- Stop smoking



Write down reasons you want to control your diabetes:

Problems you may have to solve to meet your goals:

3 Talk to your diabetes care team

- Ask your doctor or nurse for help—they want to!
- Ask your family or friends for help

Call your doctor if your blood sugar reading is below _____ or over _____

In an emergency, call 911