

DIABETES: FROM HEAD TO TOE
A Practical Self-Care Guide for the Patient with Diabetes

- GENERAL:** Take your prescribed medication as directed.
Pay attention to your blood pressure.
Carry Medical Alert identification at all times.
If you take insulin, ask your doctor about glucagon to treat low sugars.
Pay attention to good hygiene and skin care.
Be honest with yourself and your medical care-givers.
Get support from others, whenever possible.
- HEAD:** Use your head. Think about what you are doing. Read about diabetes and ongoing scientific advances.
- EYES:** See your eye doctor regularly. Call your physician if any changes in vision or pain in or around the eyes. Eye infections and blindness are much more common in diabetics.
- SINUSES:** Report any sinus problems to your physician. Sinus infections are more common in diabetics.
- EARS:** Listen to what your health professionals are advising.
- NECK:** Report any swelling or pain to you physician. Also, thyroid problems are more common in diabetics, so let someone know if you have any concerns about this.
- LUNGS:** **DON'T SMOKE!!** Smoking and diabetes are a lethal mixture, and smoking will accelerate the onset of complications.
Lung infections are also more common in diabetics. Ask you doctor about Pneumovax (pneumonia) immunization and yearly flu shots.
- HEART:** Heart disease is the major cause of death among diabetics. Keep in mind that sometimes heart disease is silent in diabetics, so please discuss **ANY** unusual symptoms that may possibly be related to a heart problem. These may include weak spells, shortness of breath, swelling, dizziness, palpitations (fluttering), or peculiar sensations in the chest.

Prevention is the most important factor in maintaining good health. Here are important factors to consider in preventing heart problems:

DON'T SMOKE

MAINTAIN GOOD DIET

**EXERCISE, BUT DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT WHAT
ACTIVITIES ARE APPROPRIATE**

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVEL - There are new standards regarding cholesterol management in diabetes.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ASPIRIN THERAPY - There is new information about the importance of aspirin in preventing heart attacks and strokes. You may be a candidate for this.

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ABDOMEN: Weight gain in this area is associated with an increased risk of heart disease.
Complications in the abdomen include gallstones, gastroparesis (slow emptying of the stomach), and diarrhea. Ask your doctor if you have any symptoms or concerns in these areas.

KIDNEYS: Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure. Ask your doctor about how your kidneys are doing and what you can do to reduce your risk. Bladder infections are also more common in diabetics. Sometimes diabetics may not feel pain or the usual symptoms of infection. Ask your doctor if you have any unexplained loss of control of your sugars or if you have ANY bladder symptoms.

SEXUAL FUNCTION:

Men: Erectile dysfunction (impotence) may be related to impaired circulation, hormone imbalances, and/or due to damaged nerves. Talk with your doctor if you have any problems in this area, so that he/she can perform the appropriate evaluation and provide effective treatment.

Women: Vaginal dryness and/or infections are common. Nerve damage may cause a loss of sensation and/or inability to achieve orgasm. Discuss any of these symptoms with your physician so he/she can perform the appropriate evaluation and provide effective treatment.

LEGS: Proper foot care is essential. Check feet daily. Notify your doctor if you have ANY problems, even if they seem to be relatively minor. Nerve function is often impaired, including unexplained pain, loss of normal sensation, or even both. This may result in injury, infections, and deformity. Check with your doctor if you have any concerns about these issues.
Circulation in the legs may be impaired, causing pain and/or weakness when walking. This may be an indication for medication or additional study to see if you are at risk of damage and/or infection in your legs or feet. In most instances, therapy will be quite effective.

[***http://www.gluco-phylaxis.com/diabetes.html***](http://www.gluco-phylaxis.com/diabetes.html)

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