

general health care tips, complications and foot care

general health care tips

Good hygiene is important for everyone. People with diabetes need to be aware that diabetes control may be affected if good health habits are not maintained.

- **Watch cuts closely.** Tell your doctor about any cut that is healing too slowly or not at all.
- **Don't get sunburned.** Sunburns are damage to the skin. They can cause higher blood sugars and maybe even ketones.
- **Dress warmly for cold weather.** Frostbite could be very damaging.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Fatigue affects everyone's performance.
- See the following doctors regularly:
 - Your endocrinologist
 - Your pediatrician or family doctor for annual check-ups, including immunizations and acute illness. This doctor will also provide sports physicals. Immunizations, including the flu shot, are an important part of preventing illness. Being ill, especially having the flu, can make it harder to manage blood sugars. It can also lead to ketones forming.
 - Dentist: Having diabetes can increase your risk for gum disease. You should see your dentist every six months.
 - Ophthalmologist (eye doctor)
 - Type 1 diabetes: After diagnosed with diabetes for 5 years, then every 1-2 years as recommended by the ophthalmologist.
 - Type 2 diabetes: At diagnosis, then every 1-2 years as recommended by the ophthalmologist.

always carry with you

The following is a suggested list of items you should carry with you:

- Blood glucose testing supplies including meter, test strips, lancets, and alcohol wipes
- Insulin syringes or pen needles with the insulin pen or insulin vial of your short acting insulin
- Ketostix
- Treatment for low BG, including food (juice box, fun size Skittles®, fruit snacks), glucose chew tabs, glucose gel and/or glucagon kit
- A copy of all settings for your pump (basal rates, ratios, sensitivity factor, target blood glucose, etc.) If you have battery failure or a problem with the pump and have to call the doctor after hours, the doctor may not have this information available to them at the time of your call. It is vital for you to have this available at all times.
- Medical identification card with contact information for your physician and emergency contacts

long-term complications

what causes complications?

The most important factor is high blood sugar over a long period of time. Eventually, high blood sugar may cause damage to the small and large blood vessels. The blood vessels in the eyes and kidneys are the most frequently damaged. Complications can occur after the person has had diabetes for at least 10 years. You can delay or lessen how severe the complications are by helping to keep your child's diabetes in good control.

affected body part/system	complications
Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blurred vision/double vision: These are temporary states due to high blood sugars.• Retinopathy: Damage to the small vessels in the eye that can lead to blindness.
Kidneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diabetic nephropathy: This can be caused by high blood sugars and/or high blood pressure. Protein leaks out of the kidney. Damaged kidneys cannot remove wastes from the bloodstream. Your diabetes doctor will regularly check your child's blood pressure and labs to monitor for kidney disease and other complications from diabetes.
Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People with diabetes are more likely to have fat build-up in their arteries. This may cause heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.
Nervous system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neuropathy: Prolonged high blood sugar can damage nerve endings, especially in the feet. This is why foot care is important.
Complications due to infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncontrolled blood sugars can lead to yeast infections.• Uncontrolled blood sugars can slow healing, leading to infection.

foot care

Because diabetes may affect the blood circulation in our legs and feet, people with diabetes must take especially good care of their feet. Diabetic children usually have good circulation. However, as your child grows into adulthood, this circulation may decrease. Good foot care will become more important.

For foot care to become routine, children need to be taught how to take care of their feet early. Taking a few extra minutes every day to do foot care may prevent serious complications later.

1. **Inspect (look over carefully) your feet every day.** Watch for cracks, blisters, cuts, sores and any signs of infection (redness, discoloration, swelling, pus). Call your pediatrician or family doctor if you notice any signs of infection.
2. **Avoid injuries to your feet.** For a person with uncontrolled diabetes, the chances of a blister or cut becoming infected are greater.

3. **Keep your feet covered.** Wear shoes or slippers everywhere, even around the house or at the pool or beach.
4. **Wear clean cotton socks, which help absorb moisture.**
 - a. Diabetic socks are not necessary.
 - b. Avoid wearing anything tight on the feet or ankles that would slow the blood flow to the feet.
5. **Wash your feet every day in warm (not hot) soapy water and rinse them well.** Dry your feet by patting with the towel until dry instead of rubbing. At this time, apply lotion to any rough spots so that the skin will not crack.
6. **Keep toenails trimmed straight across.** File down any sharp edges.
7. **Avoid shoes that rub or do not fit well.** These could cause blisters.
8. **Rub corns daily with a pumice stone.** Trimming them or applying commercial corn remedies may cause harm to your feet.
9. **Keep feet warm by wearing socks.** Do not use hot water bottles or heating pads on your feet. Avoid sun burning your feet.



medic alerts

Carrying medical identification is a must for a person with diabetes. This could be lifesaving! All children with diabetes need to wear a bracelet, necklace or anklet stating that they have type 1 diabetes.

Medic alert jewelry will protect your child's health or even their life if they need medical help due to complications related to their diabetes or if they are involved in an accident. It is very important that the medical people taking care of your child know that they have diabetes!

You can obtain medic alert jewelry from a variety of sources:

- The Medic Alert Foundation – 1-800-432-5378. They provide neck chains and wrist bracelets containing medical information tied to a 24-hour emergency response service.
- Lauren's Hope for a Cure Bracelets – 1-800-360-8680. Bracelets made of beads and crystals.
- Fifty 50 Pharmacy – 1-800-746-7505. Neoprene ID bracelets and bags to carry diabetes supplies.
- DiBon Systems – 1-941-923-2608. Maker of Just 4 U temporary, washable tattoos.
- Also available at most pharmacies and jewelry stores.

Contact your diabetes nurse educator if you have any questions or concerns about medic alert identification necklaces or bracelets.

exercise and its benefits

Exercise helps control diabetes! Eating right, taking your medications and exercising are the three main things you need to do for good diabetes control.

- Exercise can make your blood sugar go down. The drop in blood sugar can occur hours after the activity.
- Exercise helps burn fat.
- Exercise will help keep your blood pressure and cholesterol down.
- Exercise can help you cope with the stress of daily life.



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exercise and insulin

- Test your blood sugar before you exercise. Treat if low before starting.
- Pre-treat for exercise. Follow the exercise and food chart in this manual.
- Carry fast-acting foods with you when you exercise.
 - Examples: fruit juice, fruit snacks, runners' gels, or glucose tabs.
- If you will be exercising one part of your body very hard, try not to inject your insulin in that part of your body that day.
- Ask your doctor if you need to change your insulin doses!

getting started

- Choose an exercise that keeps you going at a steady pace, like walking, jogging, biking, swimming, dancing or stair climbing.
- Exercise safely:
 - Always warm up before you exercise.
 - Always cool down after you exercise.
 - Don't overdo it.
 - You need to be able to exercise 30 minutes each time you exercise. Work up to it.
 - Remember to drink plenty of water.
 - Contact your diabetes team about any exercise questions.

