

# What You Should Know About

## Managing Diabetes



### Treating Diabetes

One of your main goals in treating diabetes is to control your blood sugar level by keeping it as close to normal as possible. The blood sugar goals for people with diabetes usually are:

**Before meals** – between 80 and 120 mg/dL

**1-2 hours after meals** – 100 to 180 mg/dL

Ask your doctor to set the blood sugar target range that is right for you.

**There are two good ways to find out if your diabetes is in control. You should do both.**

#### 1. Test your blood sugar.

- Ask your doctor to teach you how to use a blood glucose meter that is available for personal use.
- Ask your doctor what your testing schedule should be.



- You may be asked to test before meals, at bedtime and after meals.
- Keep track of your results in a diary. Take it with you for your office visits so your doctor can check if your blood sugar is under control.

#### 2. Have a glycosylated hemoglobin test (HbA1c)

- This test shows your average blood sugar level over an 8-12 week period. It can give a clearer picture of whether your diabetes is in control.
- A HbA1c test should be done in your doctor's office every 3-6 months, depending on your treatment and level of diabetes control.
- **Your HbA1c should be less than 7%.**

### Possible Complications

Many people with diabetes who keep their blood sugar in their target range may not suffer any serious problems. By keeping your blood sugar as close to normal as possible you may lower your chances of having the following:

- Eye problems (blindness)
- Kidney disease
- Surgical loss of a foot or leg (amputation)
- Nerve damage (numbness)
- Sexual problems (impotence)
- Frequent infection
- A heart attack or stroke

### BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL

Blood Level Indicators*	Normal Level	Take Action if**
Blood sugar before meals	Less than 110 mg/dl	Less than 80 or more than 140 mg/dl
HbA <sub>1c</sub>	Less than 7%	More than 8%

\*Do not use these values if you are pregnant

\*\*The action that should be taken is likely to be different for different people

# Managing Diabetes

## How can I avoid complications ?

- ❑ Follow your meal plans
- ❑ Exercise regularly
- ❑ If medication is given, take medication as instructed
- ❑ Test and record your blood sugar level regularly
- ❑ Have your blood pressure checked often
- ❑ Have a complete eye exam every year
- ❑ Have your HbA1c checked at least 2-4 times a year
- ❑ Have your cholesterol checked
- ❑ Check your feet and skin every day for any redness, sensitivity or irritation
- ❑ If you smoke, stop

## Keep Track of What You Eat

### Diet

Good diabetes meal planning includes:

- ❑ Understanding how different foods and the amount eaten affect your blood sugar
- ❑ Choosing healthy foods
- ❑ Eating regular meals at the right times

Starches and sugars (carbohydrates) have more effect on blood sugar than protein or fat. Carbohydrates are foods such as bread, pasta, cereal,



beans, milk, fruit and fruit juices, and sweets. Your blood sugar level can go up when you eat more carbohydrates than your body can use. By keeping track of the carbohydrates

you eat and spreading them throughout the day, you can help control your blood sugar.

### Exercise

Exercise lowers blood sugar by helping your body use the sugar in the blood. Ask your doctor to check

you for complications that would limit certain types of exercise. Start slowly until you are able to sustain exercise for 30 to 60 minutes at least 3 times a week. Examples of exercise are walking, dancing, swimming and biking.



### Foot care

Taking extra good care of yourself is important when you have diabetes. Have your doctor test your feet at least once a year for numbness.

Things you should do to keep your feet healthy:

- ❑ Check your feet every day for redness, swelling, corns, calluses, ingrown toenails or breaks in the skin. Use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet if necessary. Report any problems to your doctor immediately.
- ❑ Cut your toenails straight across, not into the corners.
- ❑ Wear only comfortable, well fitting shoes.
- ❑ Check inside of shoes before wearing them.
- ❑ Wear clean, cotton socks with no holes.
- ❑ Don't go barefoot, even indoors.



### REMEMBER:

This resource is a guide to help you understand and manage your diabetes. It does not replace your doctor's recommendations