



# Living with Diabetes

Don't let diabetes control your life

These materials are intended for informational purposes only, and not as a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of a qualified health provider for a medical diagnosis and before starting or changing any course of treatment.

## Living with Diabetes

Diabetes is a syndrome of disordered metabolism, usually due to a combination of hereditary and environmental causes, resulting in abnormally high blood sugar. Diabetes develops due to a diminished production of insulin or resistance to its effects. Symptoms of diabetes include: excessive urination, excessive thirst, blurred vision, unexplained weight loss and lethargy.

The fasting blood sugar (FBS) should be < 100 mg/DL and post meal (or post prandial) blood glucose (PPBS) should be < 140 mg/DL. If it is above this limit, but less than 125 (FBP)/200(PPBS), it is considered pre-diabetic. Above this range is considered diabetic.

Untreated diabetes can cause several complications including cardiovascular disease, retinal damage, kidney problems, etc. Poor healing of wounds, particularly of the feet, can lead to gangrene, and possibly to amputation. Keeping blood sugar under control is therefore of utmost importance.

The following lifestyle changes will help delay the onset of diabetes, if you are pre-diabetic or, if you are already diabetic, can help you keep your blood sugar under control.

**Diet:** Eat 3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit everyday. Make half your grains whole. Skip the beef or lamb in favor of chicken or fish. For an optimal diet, proteins should provide 15% to 20% of total calorie intake per day. Saturated fats should provide less than 10% of the total calorie. 60% to 70% of the calories should come from complex carbohydrates and monosaturated fats. A high fiber intake (20-35 gms per day) and a low cholesterol intake (<300 mg per day) is recommended.

**Lose weight, if you are overweight:** Obesity is a proven cause of diabetes. Try to burn off about 500 calories a day through reduced food intake and exercise. This will help you lose 1 lb per week.

**Quit drinking:** Alcohol can cause hypoglycemia and is especially dangerous in people who take insulin. Greatly reduce or eliminate alcohol consumption.

**Exercise:** Try for atleast 30 mins of physical activity every day. Use stairs instead of elevator and walk instead of using your car wherever possible.

**Medication:** Based on your level of blood glucose, your caregiver may prescribe one or more medication or insulin injection. Medicines for diabetes include biguanides like Metformin, insulin secretagogues like Sulphonylurea and meglitinide. Insulin sensitizers like Rosiglitazone and Alpha-glucosidase inhibitor like Acarbose and Miglitol.

### Diabetic care:

- Monitor your blood sugar at home every week (if levels are high, test every day).
- Inspect your feet and check for any change in sensation, numbness or non-healing wounds every day. In case of problems, report to your physician.
- Keep your blood pressure under control.
- Check your HbA1c every 3 – 6 months.
- Visit your physician for a checkup every 3 – 6 months
- Check your cholesterol levels and kidney function (albumin/creatinine) every year.
- Get your eyes tested every 2 years.
- Assess your physical activity and manage your weight (preferably with a diabetic nutritionist) every year



Health Support Systems (HSS) helps people who are living with diabetes, obesity, hypertension or heart disease better manage their conditions through a combination of online self-monitoring tools, education and qualitative analysis, while reducing cost for care givers, employers and insurance providers.