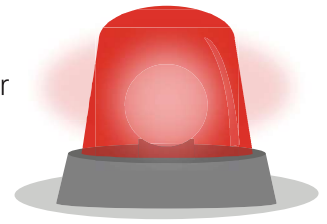


Possible Long-Term Problems

Many long-term problems with diabetes are strongly related to high blood sugar levels. By keeping your blood sugar as close to normal as possible, you may lower your chances of having the following:

- Eye problems
- Sexual problems
- Kidney disease
- Frequent infections
- Surgical loss of a foot or leg
- A heart attack or stroke
- Nerve damage



Kidney Disease

Diabetes can also damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys. This kind of kidney damage is called nephropathy, and has no early symptoms.

When this condition occurs:

- Waste products are kept in the body instead of leaving with the urine.
- Important nutrients like protein that should stay in the body are flushed away.
- Wastes continue to build up in the bloodstream.
- If the damage continues, the kidneys may fail completely.

If your kidneys fail, you must depend upon dialysis to remove waste from your bloodstream.

However, kidney damage can be found at an early and treatable stage with a simple office test that detects small amounts of protein in the urine. This test is called a microalbumin screen. You should have this test done at least once a year. There are other tests to check kidney function as well, so talk to your health care provider about which one is best for you.

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
- Yeast infections – vaginal or between pads of skin
- Mouth and tongue sores (thrush)

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

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

What To Know About Blood Pressure

- High blood pressure (hypertension) makes your heart work harder and can damage blood vessels.
- This makes it more likely that you could have a heart attack, a stroke, eye problems, or kidney problems.
- Two out of three adults with diabetes may have high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure is a "silent" problem. There may be no signs of high blood pressure. You may not know you have it until your health care provider checks your blood pressure.

Keep blood pressure below the goal to help lower the chance of heart problems

Ask your health care provider how you can control your blood pressure.

Some ways to help lower blood pressure include:

- Make healthy food choices and use less salt
- Try to lose weight
- Stay active
- Stop smoking

If your blood pressure is high, your health care provider may have you take blood pressure medicine to lower your blood pressure and help prevent heart problems.

Talk to your health care provider about a blood pressure plan that is right for you.



What the numbers mean

Blood pressure is measured with two numbers, such as "140/90 mmHg"

- The first number ("140") is the pressure of blood coming out of the heart into the blood vessels, known as "systolic" pressure
- The second number ("90") is the pressure of the blood in the vessels between heartbeats, known as "diastolic" pressure

The American Diabetes Association and the National Institutes of Health say: The blood pressure goal for people with diabetes should be below 140/90 mmHg

What To Know About Cholesterol

There are good and bad kinds of cholesterol.

Cholesterol is made by your body and comes from food you eat.



LDL cholesterol — "Bad" cholesterol that can narrow or block your blood vessels and may lead to heart attack or stroke.



HDL cholesterol — "Good" cholesterol that helps keep your blood vessels from being blocked.

Triglycerides are a type of fat in your blood that can raise your chance of heart attack or stroke.

Your health care provider will help you set goals that are right for you. Be good to your heart! Reach your cholesterol goals. Try to:

- Keep your LDL cholesterol low
- Keep your HDL cholesterol high
- Learn what foods are better or worse for you
- Be more active—find an activity that is right for you; talk to your health care provider before starting an exercise plan
- Discuss with your health care provider if taking cholesterol-lowering medicine is right for you
- Stop smoking

Diabetes And The Risk Of Heart Disease Or Stroke

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, diabetes doubles your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Diabetes raises your risk of developing high blood pressure, which puts further strain on your heart. When you have high blood glucose levels, this can contribute to the formation of fatty deposits in blood vessel walls. Over time, it can restrict blood flow and increase the risk of atherosclerosis, or hardening of the blood vessels.

But you can do things to help prevent heart disease!

Make good choices to help control blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol

- Eat less fatty foods
- Use less salt
- Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- Bake, grill or broil your food
- Be more active
- Get to and stay at a healthy weight
- Quit smoking and tobacco use



To lower your risk for heart disease and stroke:

- Take medicines as your health care provider tells you
- Ask your health care provider if taking aspirin, such as low-dose aspirin, is right for you
- Ask your health care provider about how other changes in the way you live can help

Meeting your goals	
The American Diabetes Association says you should try to reach these goals. Work with your health care provider to set your own goals.	
A1C test goal: Below 7%	My goal: _____%
Test at least twice a year, or every three months if you are not meeting your goals.	
Blood pressure goal: Below 140/90 mmHg	My goal: _____mmHg
Check at every visit.	
LDL cholesterol goal:	My goal: _____mg/dL
Check at least once a year, or more often if your health care provider tells you to.	