

Diabetes – From Head to Toe

GENERAL:

- Take your prescribed medication as directed.
- Pay attention to your blood pressure.
- 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 and ask your doctor about diabetes.

EYES: See your eye doctor regularly. Call your doctor if you notice any changes in your vision or have pain in or around your 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 doctor is 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 deadly mixture, and smoking will bring complications. Lung infections are also more common in diabetics. Ask you doctor about a flu shot.

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.**
- **Ask Your Doctor About Aspirin Therapy.**

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 you 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. **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.

If you notice any change in your health, take action and tell your doctor. Do not ignore small warning signs that may point to a complication. You may be able to slow things down and avoid more serious trouble.