

# Living healthy with diabetes

## DIABETES MANAGEMENT TIPS

**We all have a little sugar in our blood — it's what keeps us on the move!** But when you have diabetes, your blood sugar, or glucose, is higher than it should be. That's because your pancreas isn't producing enough insulin to break that sugar down.

The good news is that diabetes doesn't have to control your life. When you control your sugar, you'll control your condition. The following tips can help make it easier.

### A LIFETIME OF REWARDS

If you have diabetes, there's no time like the present to take charge of your health. When you exercise, eat right and follow your doctor's advice, the rewards will follow. You can:

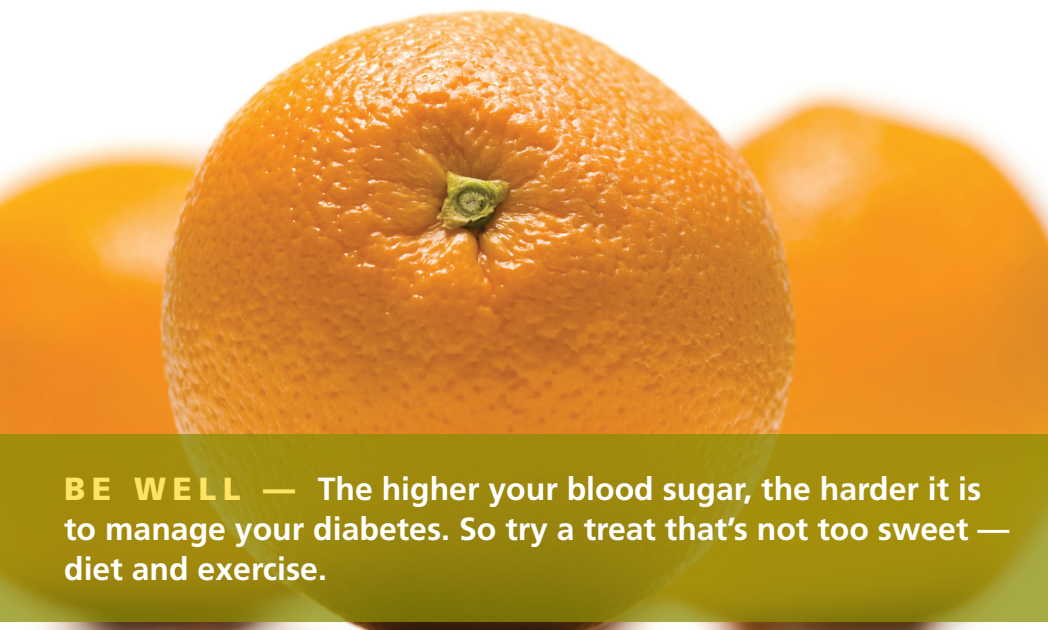
- Cut your risk for stroke, heart disease and blood vessel disease.
- Prevent eye disease or blindness.
- Avoid kidney and nerve disease.
- Prevent gum disease.

And don't forget: you'll control your weight and boost your energy!

### A DIABETES-FRIENDLY DIET

You don't have to eat special foods because you have diabetes. But you may want to talk with a dietician. He or she can help you plan meals that are good for you — and your family. The right meal plan can also help you keep your weight, blood pressure and cholesterol under control. Other tips:

- Don't skip meals.
- Eat light several times a day instead of one or two big meals.
- Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, lean meats and other high-fiber foods.
- Skip the salt.
- Try recipes low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and added sugars.
- Eat a balanced mix of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals.
- Drink less alcohol and high sugar juices or soda.
- Stay vigilant during holiday season.



**BE WELL —** The higher your blood sugar, the harder it is to manage your diabetes. So try a treat that's not too sweet — diet and exercise.

## GET ACTIVE

Everybody's "body" benefits when they are active. But exercise is especially good when you have diabetes. It can help you keep your weight down, which cuts your risk for certain diseases. And it helps your insulin work better, which lowers your blood sugar. Ready? These tips can help:

- See your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Try to be active at least 30 minutes a day.
- Carry glucose tablets or a carbohydrate snack in case your sugar drops.
- If you use insulin, check your sugar before, during and after exercise.
- If you don't use insulin, ask your doctor if you should eat before exercise.
- Carry identification with you that lets other knows you have diabetes.

The best advice — do what's best for you. Start with baby steps. If you're new to exercise, don't rush into it. Start out at 5-10 minutes per day until you feel comfortable to do it longer. Or try to be active three times a day, for 10 minutes at a time. Exercising can also be challenging depending on the time of the day and the temperature, but give it a try and adjust your routine to the environment.

**Take action on your diabetes. Resolution to make lifestyle changes, no matter how small, will make a big difference.**

Source: Your Guide to Diabetes: Type 1 and 2. National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC). Accessed August 3, 2009 at <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/>.

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## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

When your blood sugar is outside the normal range, you could feel sick. For instance, when your sugar is too high, generally over 180, you could feel thirsty, queasy, or have blurry vision. If your sugar is too low, usually under 70, you may feel weak, shaky, tired or confused. But when you know your number, you can prepare. Here are some helpful tips:

- Ask your doctor for your target number.
- Check your blood using a blood glucose meter once a day, or several times a day (be sure to check with your doctor).
- Keep a daily record of your sugar count to share with your health care team.
- Take medicine — pills, insulin or medicine you inject — that your doctor has prescribed for you.
- If you take medicines that lower your sugar, always carry food with you.
- Check your blood or urine for ketones if your sugar is above 240.
- Ask your doctor about an A1C test. It can show your blood sugar over a 2-3 month period.

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## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Controlling your family's diabetes is just as important. Being active together and adopting a healthy family diet will make your good health resolutions stronger. Supporting each other through better management of the condition by making nutrition and lifestyle changes will benefit you and your loved ones for the long run.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH

Diabetes can cause infections in your mouth. And that's not good for your health, which studies show can prove to have an effect on diabetes. But when you take care of your mouth, you'll be taking good care of your body. Here's how:

- Let your dentist know you have diabetes.
- Visit your dentist two times a year.
- Brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day.
- Quit smoking.