

# Diabetes and Heart Disease Awareness

Molina Healthy Living with Diabetes<sup>sm</sup> and Heart Healthy Living<sup>sm</sup>



Molina Healthcare of New Mexico • Summer 2013

## Living a Healthy Life with Diabetes

Many people avoid the long-term problems of diabetes by taking good care of themselves. Work with your provider to reach your ABC goals (A1c, blood pressure, cholesterol). Use this self-care plan.

### Remember to:

- Test your blood sugar often.
- Keep a record of your blood sugar results. Be sure to take this record to your provider visits.
- Schedule all yearly exams such as:
  - » A1c test (needed two to four times a year)
  - » Cholesterol test (LDL less than 100)
  - » Dilated eye exam
  - » Kidney (nephropathy) test
- Take your medicine even when you feel well. Make sure to take your medicine as prescribed by your provider.
- Use your diabetes meal plan. If you do not have one, ask your provider about one.
  - » Make healthy food choices. This includes eating more fruits and vegetables. Choose lean proteins, like fish, chicken or turkey with no skin, dry peas or beans. Make half your grains whole wheat. Choose low-fat or fat-free milk or cheese.
  - » Eat foods that have less fat, sugar and salt.
  - » Eat food with more fiber such as whole grain cereals, breads, crackers and pasta, or brown rice.
- Stay at a healthy weight by using your meal plan and moving more.
- Aim to do 30 to 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Brisk walking is a good way to move more.
- If you smoke, quit. We offer a quit smoking program. We can help. The program is at no cost to you.
- Brush your teeth twice a day. Make sure to floss daily and see your dentist every six months for a checkup and a cleaning.
- At every provider visit, ask for a:
  - » Blood pressure check
  - » Foot exam

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### Need Help Quitting Smoking?

If you need help quitting, call Molina Healthcare's Smoke Free Program. For one-on-one help, call: (866) 472-9483.

You are receiving this newsletter as part of a Disease Management Program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in any Disease Management Program please let us know. Please call us at: (866) 891-2320.

All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your provider's advice.

This newsletter and future health education newsletters may be viewed on our website at [www.MolinaHealthcare.com](http://www.MolinaHealthcare.com).

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## Have a Healthy Heart

When you have heart disease, healthy habits are even more important. Changing your diet and adding a little exercise can give you more energy. Here are a few things you can do to keep your heart healthy:



### DIET CHANGES

#### Eat more fiber

Fiber helps reduce heart disease. Try eating more high fiber foods:

- vegetables
- fresh fruits
- whole grain bread
- whole wheat pasta
- oatmeal

#### Eat less fat

To lower your fat intake, switch to low-fat or non-fat milk and cheese. Eat less butter and red meats. Try fish or skinless chicken. Instead of frying, try steaming, baking or broiling. Olive oil and canola are better fats for cooking.

#### Eat less sodium (salt)

Take your salt shaker off the table. Use lemon juice, herbs and spices to flavor your food.

#### Eat fewer calories

For your sweet tooth, eat fresh fruit like grapes and apples.

### EXERCISE

What can you do for exercise? Try walking. Start out slow and work your way toward a goal. For example, start out with a 10-minute walk and add a few more minutes each day. Be sure to drink water before, during and after exercise.

Here are some benefits to exercising:

#### It can make your body feel better.

Exercise helps stimulate various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed. Exercise also speeds up your digestion. It helps your body remove toxins faster. It also can help your immune system so you won't get sick as often.

#### It can help you relieve stress.

Exercise can help to lower stress. People who exercise feel less anxious. Walking can be a good time to clear your mind.

#### It can help lower your risk for health problems.

Regular exercise can help control cholesterol levels. Being active boosts your HDL "good" cholesterol and it can help lower unhealthy triglycerides. This helps keep your blood flowing smoothly, which lowers your risk for heart disease.

**Exercise can be easy.** Here are a few ways to include exercise into your daily schedule:

- If it is very cold or hot, walk inside a mall.
- If you don't have much time during the day, try walking at lunchtime.
- Take fifteen minutes and walk before breakfast or after dinner.
- Walk the dog.
- Encourage your spouse or your neighbor to walk with you.
- Make exercise fun by keeping track with family or friends. See how far you can go in a week!

Make sure you check with your provider before starting any diet program or exercise routine.

## Eye Problems

One of the major problems of diabetes is diabetic retinopathy or diabetic eye disease. If this is not caught early or treated, it can cause blindness. The longer you've had diabetes, the more likely you are to have eye problems. If you have diabetes, you should get your eyes checked at least once a year.

### What is diabetic eye disease?

Diabetic eye disease happens when blood sugars remain high and are not controlled. This damages tiny blood vessels in the part of the eye that is sensitive to light. This part of the eye is called the retina. A healthy retina is needed for you to see clearly.

### What are the symptoms?

You can have diabetic eye disease and not have any symptoms. Many times symptoms appear once the damage has already been done and there are problems. Symptoms can include:

- Blurry vision
- Trouble reading
- Seeing double
- Eye pain
- Seeing spots or floaters
- Seeing rings around lights, dark spots or flashing lights
- Partial or total loss of vision

Be sure to tell your provider or eye care provider about any eye problems you may have.



### What can I do to protect my eyes?

- **Keep your blood glucose (sugar) under control**  
High blood glucose can damage your eyes as time goes by. Work with your provider to keep your sugar levels as close to normal as you can.
- **Keep your blood pressure under control**  
High blood pressure can damage your eyes. Have your provider check your blood pressure at least four times a year. If you have high blood pressure, your provider may give you medicine to bring it down. You also may need to check your blood pressure at home. Ask your provider where you can buy a cuff.
- **Get your eyes checked**  
If you have diabetes, you need to get a dilated eye exam every year. This exam checks for early signs of retinopathy. For this exam, the provider will put drops in your eyes to dilate your pupils (make them bigger). This lets in more light. This allows the provider to see the retina and small blood vessels at the back of your eye. Ask your provider to help you find an eye care provider who cares for people with diabetes. Remember, treating eye problems early can help save your sight.
- **Treating diabetic eye disease**  
There are different types of treatments. The treatment depends on the kind of eye problem that you have. While they are very successful, they do not cure diabetic eye disease. Sight that has already been lost cannot be brought back.

Take care of your diabetes and your eyes. Get an eye exam to save your sight.

## Keeping Track of Your Medicines Can Help You Stay Healthy

If you take medicine every day, it is easy to lose track. You may find yourself asking, “Did I take it this morning or was that yesterday?” It is easy to get confused. Some medicines must be taken at different times from others. Some must be taken with food. Others must be taken on an empty stomach. Some even require self-testing before taking them. Taking your medicines the right way is important.

We want to help you take your medicine as prescribed by your provider. Making a checklist and tracking all your medicine is a good start. Here are some suggestions on how to make and use a checklist:

### *Making a Medicine Checklist*

Making a medicine checklist is easy and only takes a few minutes. Simply write down each medicine you take. List the time of the day you should take it. Write down any special instructions. Include self-testing that needs to be done for that medicine (for example, blood sugar testing for insulin). Make a new list each week or make photocopies.

Be sure to take your lists with you to your next provider visit. It is a good idea to take all your medicine bottles.

*An example of a checklist you might make is below (showing two days of the week):*

Week of: November 20th

Medications	Instructions	Sun	Mon
Metformin 500 mg tablet	Take one tablet twice a day with food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8:00 a.m. <hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5:00 p.m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8:00 a.m. <hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5:00 p.m.
Simvastatin 40 mg tablet	Take one tablet every night at bedtime	<hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9:00 p.m.	<hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9:00 p.m.



### *Using a Medicine Checklist*

Write the date at the top of each new checklist. Then, check off medicines as you take them. If you are late taking a medicine, write down the time you took it. That way you will always know which ones you have taken. This information will help your health care provider know if your medicines are doing what they should.



## ABCs of Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that can be managed if you take care of yourself and watch your health. First you must know the **ABCs** of diabetes.

**A is for Hemoglobin A1c.** This is a simple blood test that tells your average blood glucose over the past three months. You should have this test at least twice a year. The A1c goal for many people with diabetes is below 7 percent. Work with your provider to set a goal that is right for you.

**B is for Blood pressure.** High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. If left untreated, it can cause a heart attack, stroke or kidney disease. The goal for people with diabetes is below 130/80. Ask your provider if you need to check your blood pressure at home.

**C is for Cholesterol.** Bad cholesterol (LDL) can build up and clog your blood vessels. It also can cause a heart attack or stroke. The LDL goal for most people with diabetes is below 100. Good cholesterol (HDL) helps to remove bad cholesterol from the blood vessels. The HDL goal for most people with diabetes is above 60.

All of these are important tests to monitor if you want to be in control of your diabetes.



## Medicine Ordered by Your Provider

Start Date	End Date	Name of Medicine	Dose (units, puffs, drops)	When do you take it? (How many times per day, morning and night?)	Purpose (Why do you take it?)	Side Effects

Medical Conditions:  Asthma  Heart Disease  Diabetes  High Blood Pressure  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Known Drug/Food Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Questions about Your Health?

*Call Our Nurse Advice Line!*

English: (888) 275-8750

Spanish: (866) 648-3537

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Your family's health is our priority!  
For the hearing impaired, please call

TTY (English): (866) 735-2929

TTY (Spanish): (866) 833-4703

or 711