



Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 English

1-866-648-3537 Spanish

OPEN 24 HOURS!

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call

TTY/866-735-2929 English

TTY/866-833-4703 Spanish



ABC's 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 **ABC's** of diabetes. **A** is for Hemoglobin **A1c**, **B** stands for **B**lood pressure and **C** is for **C**holesterol. All of these are important things to monitor if you want to be in control of your diabetes.

Hemoglobin A1c (also called A1c):

This test shows the average blood sugar over the past 3 months. An A1c test measures how much glucose has been sticking to your red blood cells. Since each red blood cell is replaced by a new one every 4 months, this test tells you how high the glucose levels have been during the life of the cells. This test is the best way to see how well your treatment and self-care are working. It will show if the blood sugar is under control or not. The test results will let your doctor know whether your diabetes medicine and diet needs to be changed. You can work with your doctor to keep your A1c number in a normal range. A normal A1c is 7% or lower.

Blood Pressure

Measuring blood pressure means that your doctor is seeing how hard or fast blood hits the walls of blood vessels in your body. Blood pressure tests measure two things.

1. Systolic pressure: the pressure of blood in the blood vessels when your heart contracts (beats).
2. Diastolic pressure: the pressure of blood in the blood vessels when your heart is at rest.

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Smoking and Diabetes Do Not Mix

Would you like to stop smoking? Call the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669) or www.ohiotobaccoquitline.com for information about smoking cessation programs.

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Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at www.molinahealthcare.com. You can use the Internet for free at most public libraries. "Click" on the member button and drag your mouse down to your state. You can get information on our website about:

- Molina Healthcare's contracted doctors and hospitals
- Your benefits, including copayments and other charges (if they apply)
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Drug formulary (approved drugs that doctors can prescribe)
- How to contact UM staff about a UM issue or question
- How to get primary care, hospital, specialty, and emergency services
- How to get care after normal office hours
- Preventive health guidelines and immunization schedule
- Your rights and responsibilities and the privacy of your information
- Restrictions on benefits or how to obtain care outside the Molina Healthcare service area
- Quality Improvement, Health Education, and Disease Management programs
- How to voice a complaint or appeal a medical decision
- How we decide about using new technology

You can ask for printed copies of anything posted on the website by calling 1-800-642-4168. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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ABC's of Diabetes, *continued*...

If your blood pressure is “120 over 80” or 120/80, the top number is systolic pressure and the bottom is diastolic pressure. If your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, you have high blood pressure. High blood pressure means that your heart works harder, your arteries get weaker, and your chances for stroke, heart attack, or kidney problems are greater. This is why it is important to get your blood pressure checked and work with your doctor on keeping it at a good number for you.

Cholesterol

When people say “cholesterol,” they may really mean lipid panel. It is important to go to your doctor regularly to get your levels tested. Lipids are fats in the bloodstream. Lipids are in all of your cells. You need lipids for some of the body's functions.

There are really four parts to a lipid panel:

- Total cholesterol
- HDL – sometimes called “good cholesterol”
- LDL – sometimes called “bad cholesterol”
- Triglycerides – another type of fat in the blood.

HDL is good cholesterol. It does things like remove fat and bad cholesterol from the blood. The more you have of this the better. Exercise can help your HDL be even better.

LDL is bad cholesterol. LDL can build up in your arteries and block them. Triglycerides are another kind of fat. Fats cannot be dissolved into the blood. If there is too much fat along the walls of an artery, this can cause a blockage. This prevents blood or oxygen from getting through. It can even break off and cause a heart attack or stroke. This is why it is important to watch your fat levels.

Foods from animals like meat, poultry, fish, seafood and dairy products have cholesterol. Foods from plants like fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds do not have cholesterol. Try to eat more foods like these.

Diabetes can damage many different parts of your body. You may not have any symptoms of the damage until it is too late to do much about it. It is important to visit your doctor often and have a set schedule for these and other important test. These tests give you and your doctor a chance to find problems early, when they are easier to treat. Talk to your doctor about a test schedule that's right for you.

A Step Forward for Your Feet

When you have diabetes, it is important that you pay close attention to your feet.

High blood sugar can cause damage to the nerves (neuropathy) in your feet. When you have neuropathy the following can happen:

- Feet and legs often feel numb
- It can be hard for you to feel pain or temperature change
- You may not realize you have a blister or cut

Corns, blisters, warts or athlete's foot can be trouble. Any of these problems can lead to an infection that is hard to heal if you have diabetes. Ask your doctor about diabetic shoes and cotton socks.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR:

- If your feet or legs feel tingly or are swollen
- If you have a sore that won't go away
- If there are changes in the color of the skin on your feet
- If you have pain in your legs while sitting or walking
- If the skin around your heel is cracked
- If you have question about how to cut your toenails or use a pumice stone

EVERY DOCTOR VISIT:

- Remove your shoes and socks every time you visit your doctor. He or she can check for blisters and sores that you may not have noticed.

Be sure to keep your diabetes in control to prevent neuropathy. Make sure to take good care of your feet.

Eye Problems

Diabetic eye disease (also called diabetic retinopathy) is a serious problem that can lead to loss of sight. There's a lot you can do to prevent such problems. A recent study shows that keeping your blood glucose (sugar) level closer to normal can prevent or delay the onset of diabetic eye disease.

Keeping your blood pressure under control is also important. Finding and treating any eye problems early can help to save your sight.

SIGNS OF DIABETIC EYE DISEASE

Since diabetic eye disease may be developing even when your sight is good, regular eye exams are important for finding problems early. Some people may notice signs of vision changes. If you are having trouble reading, if your vision is blurred, or if you're seeing rings around lights, dark spots, or flashing lights, you may have eye problems. Be sure to tell your healthcare team or eye doctor about any eye problems you may have.

PROTECTING YOUR SIGHT

- **Keep your blood glucose (Sugar) under control**
High blood glucose can damage your eyes as time goes by. Work with your health care team to keep your glucose levels as close to normal as you can.
- **Keep your blood Pressure under control**
High blood pressure can damage your eyes. Have your doctor check your blood pressure at least 4 times a year. If your blood pressure is higher than 130/80 mmHg, your doctor may give you medicine to bring it down. You can also buy a blood pressure cuff and check your blood pressure at home. Ask your doctor where you can buy a cuff.
- **Get regular eye exams**
Even if you're seeing fine, you need a complete eye exam every year to protect your sight. Ask your doctor to help you find an eye doctor who cares for people with diabetes. Before the exam, a doctor or nurse may put drops in your eyes to dilate the pupils.

Write down the date for your eye test on your diabetes care wallet card. Even if you've lost your sight from

diabetic eye disease, you still need to have regular eye care. If you have not already had a complete eye exam, you should have one now if any of these conditions apply to you:

- You've had Type 1 diabetes for 5 or more years.
- You have Type 2 diabetes.
- You're going through puberty and you have diabetes.
- You're pregnant and you have diabetes.
- You're planning to become pregnant and you have diabetes.

• Treating Diabetic Eye Disease

Treating eye problems early can help save your sight. Laser surgery may help people who have advanced diabetic eye disease. An operation called a vitrectomy may help those who have lost their sight from bleeding in the back of the eye. If your sight is poor, an eye doctor may be able to give you glasses or other devices that can help you use your limited vision more fully.



You are receiving this as part of the Healthy Living with DiabetesSM program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in the Healthy Living with DiabetesSM program, please call us at Molina Health Education at 1-800-642-4168.