

Preventing Diabetes Problems

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Heart Disease & Stroke

Diabetes can damage blood vessels and lead to heart disease and stroke. You can do a lot to prevent heart disease and stroke by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and by not smoking.

Low Blood Glucose (Hypoglycemia)

Hypoglycemia occurs when your blood glucose drops too low. Certain diabetes medicines make low blood glucose more likely. You can prevent hypoglycemia by following your meal plan and balancing your physical activity, food, and medicines. Testing your blood glucose regularly can also help prevent hypoglycemia.

Diabetic Neuropathy

Diabetic neuropathy is nerve damage that can result from diabetes. Different types of nerve damage affect different parts of your body. Managing your diabetes can help prevent nerve damage that affects your feet and limbs, and organs such as your heart.

Kidney Disease

Diabetic kidney disease, also called diabetic nephropathy, is kidney disease caused by diabetes. You can help protect your kidneys by managing your diabetes and meeting your blood pressure goals.

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Foot Problems

Diabetes can cause nerve damage and poor blood flow, which can lead to serious foot problems. Common foot problems, such as a callus, can lead to pain or an infection that makes it hard to walk. Get a foot checkup at each visit with your health care team.

Eye Disease

Diabetes can damage your eyes and lead to low vision and blindness. The best way to prevent eye disease is to manage your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol; and to not smoke. Also, have a dilated eye exam at least once a year.

Gum Disease & Other Dental Problems


Diabetes can lead to problems in your mouth, such as infection, gum disease, or dry mouth. To help keep your mouth healthy, manage your blood glucose, brush your teeth twice a day, see your dentist at least once a year, and don't smoke.

Sexual & Bladder Problems


Sexual and bladder problems are more common in people with diabetes. Problems like erectile dysfunction, loss of interest in sex, bladder leaks, and retained urine can happen if diabetes damages your blood vessels and nerves. Treatments are available to help control symptoms and restore intimacy.

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Depression & Diabetes

[Depression](#) [NIH](#)  is common among people with a chronic, or long-term, illness such as diabetes. Depression can be treated so tell your doctor if you feel sad, hopeless, or anxious.


Cancer & Diabetes

Diabetes is linked to some types of [cancer](#) . Many risk factors for cancer and for diabetes are the same. Not smoking and getting recommended cancer screenings can help prevent cancer.

Dementia & Diabetes

High blood glucose increases the chance of developing [dementia](#) [NIH](#) . Tell your doctor if you are forgetful because dementia can make it hard to manage your diabetes.

Sleep Apnea & Diabetes

People who have [sleep apnea](#) [NIH](#) —when you stop breathing for short periods during sleep—are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. Sleep apnea also can make diabetes worse. Treatment for sleep apnea can help.

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The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
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