

1. What is Diabetes?

- **Type 1 Diabetes:** A condition where the pancreas does not produce insulin. This type is typically diagnosed in children, teens, or young adults.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** A more common form of diabetes, where the body does not use insulin properly (insulin resistance) and may not make enough insulin. This type is often preventable and more common in adults, though it can affect children as well.
- **Gestational Diabetes:** A type of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

2. Understanding Blood Sugar Levels

- Blood sugar (glucose) is a main source of energy for the body. It is controlled by insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas.
- Normal blood sugar levels are usually between **70-130 mg/dL** before meals and **less than 180 mg/dL** two hours after meals.
- A healthcare provider can help determine a target range for an individual's blood sugar levels based on their specific condition.

3. Monitoring Blood Sugar

- Regular blood sugar monitoring helps you understand how well your diabetes management plan is working.
- People with diabetes may use a **blood glucose meter** or continuous glucose monitor (CGM) to track their levels.
- A **hemoglobin A1c test** is done at regular intervals to measure average blood sugar over the past 2-3 months. A typical target for most people is below **7%**, but this can vary based on individual health needs.

4. Healthy Eating

- **Balanced diet:** Eating a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains, can help keep blood sugar stable.
- **Carb counting:** Monitoring the amount of carbohydrates consumed at each meal is important, as carbs have the most significant effect on blood sugar levels.
- **Limit sugary foods:** Minimize foods and drinks that are high in sugar and unhealthy fats to prevent blood sugar spikes.

- **Portion control:** Portion sizes also play a critical role in managing blood sugar and weight.

5. Physical Activity

- Regular physical activity can help the body use insulin more effectively, improve blood sugar control, and reduce the risk of complications.
- Aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, or **75 minutes** of vigorous-intensity activity each week, along with muscle-strengthening activities twice a week.

6. Medications

- **Insulin:** People with type 1 diabetes and some with type 2 diabetes may need to take insulin to help manage blood sugar.
- **Oral medications:** For type 2 diabetes, medications such as metformin can help the body use insulin better or stimulate the pancreas to release more insulin.
- It's important to take medications as prescribed and work with healthcare providers to adjust medications as needed.

7. Managing Stress

- Stress can affect blood sugar levels, so it's important to find ways to manage stress effectively. Techniques like deep breathing, yoga, meditation, and regular exercise can be helpful.

8. Regular Check-Ups

- Regular visits to a healthcare provider are essential for monitoring diabetes and preventing complications.
- Key exams may include checking **blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and kidney function**, as well as **eye and foot exams** to detect any complications early.

9. Preventing Complications

- Diabetes can lead to serious complications like heart disease, nerve damage, kidney disease, and eye problems. However, with proper management, these risks can be reduced.
- Regular screening for complications and early intervention are critical to maintaining long-term health.

10. Caring for Your Mental Health

- Diabetes management can sometimes feel overwhelming. It is important to reach out for support if you're feeling stressed, anxious, or depressed about your diabetes care.
- Consider talking to a counselor, joining a diabetes support group, or communicating openly with family and friends.

11. Emergency Care

- Know the signs of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) such as shakiness, dizziness, sweating, and confusion, and have quick-acting sources of sugar (like glucose tablets, juice, or hard candy) on hand.
- Also be aware of the symptoms of high blood sugar (hyperglycemia), which include increased thirst, frequent urination, and fatigue. In extreme cases, it can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), a serious condition.