



EmblemHealth[®]

WHAT CARE FEELS LIKE.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR DIABETES



WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a health problem in which the amount of blood sugar in the body is too high. Here's how it happens:

- Sugar that you eat or drink is digested and broken down to a simple sugar, known as glucose. The glucose then goes through your blood where it waits to enter cells and be used as fuel for your body.**
- Your pancreas, an organ next to your stomach, produces a hormone called insulin, which moves the glucose into cells.**
- A healthy pancreas adjusts the insulin level based on the amount of glucose in the blood. But, diabetes happens when your pancreas does not make enough insulin or your cells do not respond normally to insulin. If this happens, the glucose in your blood builds up and blood sugar (glucose) levels become too high.**

Diabetes can increase your chance of heart disease and stroke, kidney disease and vision and nerve problems.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Common signs of diabetes may include:

- Going to the bathroom to pass urine often
- Weight loss
- Needing to drink more liquids than normal
- Being more tired than normal
- Getting annoyed easily
- Having cuts that do not heal quickly
- Having gum disease or infections often
- Feeling tingling or numbness in your hands or feet

How is it found?

A blood test called a fasting plasma glucose test is used to look for diabetes. This test measures blood glucose in a person who has not eaten anything for at least eight hours. This blood test can also show if a person has a high level of blood sugar that has not yet, but soon could, turn into diabetes.

What increases the chance of having diabetes?

- Age
- Race
- Family history
- Being overweight
- Having high blood pressure

How is it treated?

Your doctor will have you regularly test your blood glucose level using a glucose meter. Based on your glucose level, your doctor may recommend:

- Medicine
- Insulin – this can be in the form of a pen, shot or pump
- A change in your diet and/or level of exercise
- Losing weight

Is it OK to skip a dose of diabetes medicine?

You need to take your medicine every day

to help lower your chance of having long-term effects from diabetes. If you are finding it hard to take your medicine on time, see the “Hints to Help You Remember To Take Your Medicine” in this pamphlet or talk to your doctor.

What other tests are needed?

Your doctor may perform one or more of these tests to see how your diabetes is affecting your health:

- HbA1c blood test – Done four times per year to watch how your blood sugar is being controlled over a year
- Cholesterol screening – Done yearly to check levels of “good” and “bad” cholesterol. Bad cholesterol can increase your chance of heart disease.
- Blood Pressure – Done at each visit to check for high blood pressure
- Kidney function test – Yearly test to check how your kidneys are working
- Dilated eye exam – Yearly exam to check for harm to the eyes
- Foot exam

Your doctor will also go over all of the medicines you take at each office visit to make sure that you are taking the right medicines and doses.

What can happen if diabetes is not controlled?

If you are skipping doses of your medicine or do not follow your doctor’s plan to treat your diabetes, you may increase your chance of:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Blindness
- Death

The medicine your doctor prescribed can help you control your diabetes. But if you don't take your medicine exactly as your doctor ordered, you increase your chance of having heart or kidney disease, stroke or blindness.

This pamphlet can help you get the most out of your medicine. Read the hints below and go over the "Questions for Your Doctor" during your next office visit.

HINTS TO HELP YOU REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

- Make taking your diabetes medicine part of your daily routine. Use a pillbox to store your medicine and leave it where you brush your teeth to help you remember to take it.
- Set the alarm on your watch, clock or cell phone to help remind you to take your medicine at the right time.
- Some medicines work better when taken with food while others do not. If your medicine should be taken with food, keep it on the kitchen counter as a reminder to take it with your meal.
- Ask a friend or family member to call you to help remind you to take your medicine. It's a great way to stay in touch too!

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

1. Why am I taking this medicine and how will it help my diabetes? _____

2. How often and at what times of the day should I take this medicine? _____

3. What should I do if I miss a dose? _____

4. Should I take all the medicine even though I feel fine? _____

5. How can I tell if this medicine is working? Are there any tests I need while taking this medicine? _____

6. Are there any side effects from this medicine? _____

7. How long will I need to take this medicine? Do I need a refill? _____

8. Does my prescription drug plan cover this medicine? Is there a generic option available? _____

9. Can I get a 90-day supply? Can I order this medicine through the mail? _____

If you have questions about your prescription drug coverage, we can help. Visit **www.emblemhealth.com/pharmacy** or call Customer Service at the phone number on the back of your ID card.

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