

Preventing Diabetes Complications: Taking Medications Properly

When you have Type 2 Diabetes, not only do you need to take an active role in managing your blood glucose every day, but you also have to take steps to protect your body from the serious health problems diabetes can cause.

Part of your diabetes management plan may include taking medications to help you successfully reach both of these goals.

Type 2 Diabetes means you have too much glucose, a form of sugar in your blood. But you probably also have high levels of blood fats like cholesterol and triglycerides as well. Together, these substances can damage the inside walls of your blood vessels.

At the same time, your heart has to work harder to keep the blood moving. This can result in high blood pressure.

The combination of high blood glucose, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure is what often leads to serious complications like heart attack, stroke and poor circulation.

But studies have shown that you can greatly reduce your chance of having a heart attack or stroke, or developing other long term health problems, by keeping your blood glucose, blood cholesterol and blood pressure in a healthy range. Medications can help.

Talk to your diabetes care team about which medications they would recommend for you based on your overall health. You may take medications specifically for your diabetes, including insulin.

"I take Lantus every night before I go to bed. And Lantus works 24 hours a day."

You may take a medication to control your cholesterol or blood pressure levels. Or you may take a combination of all three.

If you are over the age of forty, talk to your diabetes care team about whether taking medications like aspirin, ACE inhibitors or statins are right for you. These types of medications can help reduce your risk of heart disease, but only take medications that are prescribed specifically for you.

Always take your medication as directed to ensure you are getting all the benefits it can provide.

If there are any obstacles to taking your medications as directed, for example you aren't sure how to take your insulin, or you cannot afford the prescription and stretch it out or skip filling it altogether, talk to your healthcare provider instead of just not taking it. She can help you problem solve to get over these obstacles so you can take your medications properly. She may give you extra instructions to help you, or help you find a prescription plan that meets your budget.

Because you may be prescribed more than one type of medication, keep all of your medications organized so you don't miss a dose.

To help to remember to take your medications you can make a note on the calendar, use a pillbox, or set an alarm on your phone or tablet.

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However you choose to manage your medications, make sure it works for your lifestyle.

Any medication can have side effects. Common side effects of diabetes medications include: diarrhea, stomach pain, bloating, headaches, muscle pain, and weight loss or gain.

If you do experience any side effects, do not stop taking your medications until you discuss your concerns with your diabetes care team.

It is a good idea to take an updated list of all the medications you are taking to each healthcare visit.

And fill all of your prescriptions at the same pharmacy to help make sure there are no potential problems with any medications you are taking.

Medications can help you take an active role in managing your diabetes and also can protect your body from the serious health problems it can cause. But you must take them properly to ensure that they work as they are meant to. Talk to your diabetes care team today if you have questions or concerns about the medications you take.