

Diabetes Complications: Early Treatment

When you have Type 2 Diabetes you have a greater chance of developing many serious health problems - like heart disease, stroke, nerve disease, eye disease, kidney disease, and gum disease - problems that if left untreated can greatly affect your quality of life, or worse, threaten life itself.

But you can take action to protect yourself and slow or stop the progression of these complications before they stop you from living the life you want to live. Early treatment is key.

Begin by making, and keeping, all of your recommended healthcare appointments. Because the long term effects of diabetes can affect your body in different ways, you will have more than one healthcare provider working together as a team to ensure any health problems are found as quickly as possible.

At each healthcare visit, your diabetes care team will check to see how well your blood glucose is controlled and if any of the long-term complications have begun to develop or are getting worse. Make sure to bring your blood glucose log with you to each care team visit.

Your diabetes care team will also use an A1C test to check your blood glucose. The A1C test is a blood test done at your doctor's office or a lab that measures the average amount of glucose in your blood over the past 3 months. This number can help your diabetes care team determine how well your blood glucose is controlled.

Keeping your blood glucose in a healthy target range can help you prevent any long term health problems from getting worse so talk to your diabetes care team about ways to get the healthy glucose results you need every day.

Your healthcare provider will check your blood pressure at each visit and your cholesterol levels will be monitored through regular lab tests, about every 6 months to a year. High blood glucose, high blood pressure and high cholesterol can all damage the large and small blood vessels of your body and cause heart attack, stroke and other serious health problems.

Early treatment of blood vessel damage through lifestyle changes and medication can prevent many of these health problems from getting worse.

Do all you can to protect your body and prevent further complications.

At each visit, make sure your healthcare provider checks your legs and feet for any signs of infection or nerve damage.

Do not ignore even the smallest of sores on your legs and feet because, if left untreated, the sore can become infected and may lead to amputation.

Ask your healthcare provider whether a podiatrist is right for you. They can help you prevent foot problems from getting worse.

People with poorly controlled diabetes may develop retinopathy, which is a disease of the small blood vessels in the retina of the eye.

While seeing spots or other vision changes can indicate eye disease often people have no symptoms. You should see an ophthalmologist once a year to help diagnosis problems early so they can be treated.

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As with eye disease, early kidney disease has few symptoms.

Fortunately, kidney disease can be detected by certain blood and urine tests. Make sure your diabetes care team performs these tests each year.

And finally, make sure to schedule an appointment with your dentist every 6 months to check for gum disease. When you have Type 2 Diabetes, you are at risk for very serious health problems. Take action to prevent any long term health problems from getting worse.

Take control of your blood glucose levels. Go to all of your healthcare appointments.

With these appointments, your healthcare provider can detect and treat any health problems before they progress. With early treatment you can continue to live life to the fullest, despite Type 2 Diabetes.