



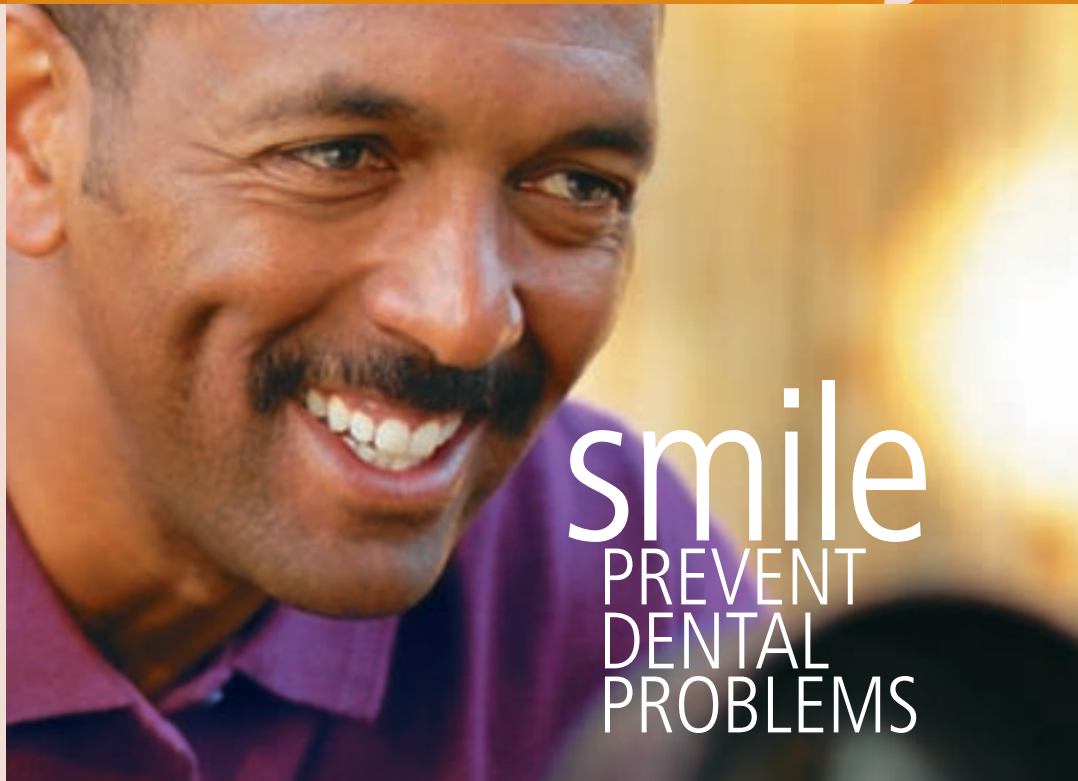
# diabetes today

HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION

## Managing your blood sugar

Controlling blood sugar levels when you have a dental appointment can be a challenge. These tips from the American Diabetes Association can help:

- Eat before you see your dentist. If you take insulin, try to schedule your appointment for the morning, after you've eaten breakfast.
- Take your usual medicines before a dental visit unless your doctor or dentist tells you to change the dose.
- Stick to your normal meal plan after dental work. If you can't chew well, ask your doctor or dietitian how to get the calories you need.



smile  
PREVENT  
DENTAL  
PROBLEMS

## Dental checkups are a must

Seeing your doctor regularly is an important part of managing your diabetes. And so is seeing your dentist. A dentist can spot diabetes-related problems with your teeth and gums early, so that more serious problems can be prevented.

You should visit your dentist twice a year to have your teeth cleaned and checked, advises the National Institutes of Health.

A dentist can also give you advice on the best ways to brush and floss.



**TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOUR** teeth and gums is always important. But if you have diabetes, you'll need to give them some extra TLC.

That's because high blood sugar boosts the risk for gum infections that could cost you your teeth.

Red, sore gums are the first signs of gum disease, says the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse. These problems can lead to an infection in the gums and the bone that holds teeth in place.

To protect yourself:

- Keep your blood sugar level as close to normal as possible.
- Floss at least once daily. Flossing helps prevent the buildup of plaque on your teeth. And this

buildup contributes to gum disease.

- Brush your teeth after every meal and snack. Use a brush with soft bristles to brush gently against the gumline and the front, back

Call your dentist if you have red, sore or bleeding gums.

and top of each tooth. ■ If you smoke, ask your doctor for help quitting. Smoking also increases your risk for gum disease. ■ Call your dentist if you have red, sore or bleeding gums; gums that are pulling away from your teeth; or any sore teeth.

# HEALTH facts

## USE THE RIGHT TEST STRIPS

If you test your blood glucose level with a glucose meter, be sure to only use the test strips specified for that particular brand and model of meter. The device may give inaccurate results if you don't use the correct test strips. Check the owner's manual that came with the meter to find out which test strips are recommended.

—U.S. Food and Drug Administration

## SEE YOUR EYE DOCTOR YEARLY

People with diabetes are at risk for eye problems, including cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy (damage to the retina). That's why if you have diabetes, you should see an eye care professional at least once a year for a dilated eye exam—even if your vision is OK.

—American Diabetes Association; National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse



## diabetestoday

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# TAKE A SHOT AGAINST THE flu

IF IT'S FALL, IT'S TIME FOR A FLU shot.

That's good advice for almost everyone. But those with diabetes should pay special heed.

The flu, or influenza, can be particularly hard on people with diabetes.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a person with diabetes is six times more likely to be hospitalized because of flu complications than someone without diabetes.

Having diabetes also puts you at higher risk for complications from the flu. That means that once you fall ill, you're susceptible to developing other problems, such as:

■ Pneumonia. ■ Ear and sinus infections. ■ Dehydration.

You can help protect yourself by getting a flu vaccination every year.

Why yearly? Because that's how often the flu virus changes, notes the CDC. And every year the vaccine is changed in response.

Getting the shot doesn't guarantee that you won't get the flu, but it does make it less likely that you will. And if you do get the flu, your illness will probably be milder than it would otherwise have been.

You can rest assured, however, that you can't get the flu from the vaccine. The shot contains a dead virus.

A nasal-spray flu vaccine that contains a live but weakened virus

The flu, or influenza, can be particularly hard on people with diabetes.

is not recommended for people with diabetes or other chronic health problems.

Some people—such as those allergic to eggs—shouldn't get a flu shot, so be sure to talk to your doctor before being vaccinated.

Additional source: American Diabetes Association

# MAKE A MOVE TO exercise

HAVING DIABETES GIVES YOU A special reason to stay fit and active.

Among other benefits, exercise can help control your weight and your blood sugar. It also lowers your risk for heart disease and nerve damage, which are often problems for people with diabetes.

It's important to choose an exercise that is fun and safe for you. Aerobic activities—such as walking briskly, jogging and skiing—and group sports, such as basketball and tennis, are often recommended.

However, if you have nerve problems that affect your feet and legs, consider exercise that doesn't stress your lower limbs, such as swim-

## Exercise can help control your weight and your blood sugar.

ming, bicycling or rowing.

Strength training is a good way to build muscle. However, you should consult your doctor about lifting heavy weights if you have high blood pressure or blood vessel or eye problems.

Whatever you do, learn stretching exercises that will increase flex-

ibility and prevent soreness after exercise.

## Exercise safely

Benefits of exercise generally outweigh the risks, but it pays to be safe. To avoid problems: ■ Begin a new exercise program slowly. Gradually increase your activity.

■ Ask your diabetes doctor whether you should change your medication dosage before physical activity or if there is a preferable time of day for you to exercise.

■ Check your blood sugar level before you exercise. If it isn't within recommended levels, delay your activity. ■ Don't skip meals before you exercise. ■ Have a snack, such as juice or candy, or glucose tablets handy in case your blood sugar drops too low while exercising.

■ Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise. ■ Protect your feet. Wear cotton socks and well-fitting athletic shoes. Check your feet for sores, blisters, irritation, cuts or other injuries after exercise.

Once you've developed the exercise habit, you'll be glad you did.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Diabetes Association; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## No more excuses

Getting yourself pumped up about exercise can be a challenge. To remove potential obstacles, try these tips from the American Diabetes Association:

■ Don't know how to start exercising? Find something you enjoy. Try different activities on different days if you're feeling bored.

■ Can't afford to join a fitness center? Do something that doesn't require fancy equipment. Walk, or use cans of food as weights.

■ Don't have 30 minutes for a workout? Work out for 10 minutes, three times a day.

■ Too tired after work? Plan something active before work or during the day.

■ Anxious about safety in your

neighborhood? Walk inside a shopping mall or attend an exercise class at a community center.

■ Bothered by sore muscles? Learn how to warm up before activity and how to cool down afterward.

■ Worried about exercise-related low blood sugar? Ask your doctor how to monitor and control blood glucose levels before, during and after exercise.



## HEALTHY . recipe

### Broccoli, cherry tomato and watercress salad

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1 tablespoon unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, stems removed, cut in half
- 1 bunch watercress, long stems trimmed, coarsely chopped

#### Instructions

1. In vegetable steamer set over boiling water, steam broccoli, covered, until tender, about 4 minutes. Rinse with cold water; drain well.
2. In large bowl, whisk vinegar, olive oil, garlic, and salt and black pepper. Add broccoli, tomatoes and watercress. Toss to blend.
3. Serve immediately.

#### Nutrition information

Makes four servings.  
**Per serving:** 58 calories, 4g total fat  
(<1g saturated fat), 6g carbohydrates, 2g protein,  
2g dietary fiber, 20mg sodium

Source: Adapted from a recipe from the American Institute for Cancer Research

## SPEAK up

### HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

BEING ABLE TO TALK FRANKLY with your doctor and to fully understand your doctor's responses is essential for good medical care. If that seems easier said than done, consider these tips for productive, two-way communication: ■ Before each visit, make a written list of what you'd like to discuss with your doctor. You don't want to return home and only then remember an unasked—and important—question. Also, arrive with a list of any medicines, vitamins or supplements that you take. ■ Don't hold back information about any symptoms or health concerns you have, even if you are

momentarily embarrassed. Your doctor can't treat hidden problems.

- If you don't understand what your doctor is telling you, let your doctor know and ask to have it explained a different way. ■ Bring someone with you. A friend or family member can help you remember your doctor's advice. ■ Be sure to follow any instructions your doctor gives you, such as scheduling an appointment with a specialist. ■ Finally, follow up. If you start to feel worse, have problems with medicine or haven't gotten the

results of medical tests, get in touch with your doctor.

Sources: AARP; American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

For more information,  
call our nurse line at  
800-455-2476.