



## How to support your loved one with Diabetes

**Participate:** Get educated! Tag along to diabetic appointments or educational classes. If you are responsible for the food shopping and cooking meet with a registered dietician.

**Communication:** A diabetes diagnosis can be a tough adjustment for both of you. Ask openly how you can support your loved one and continue them to encourage their needs.

**Avoid the Food Police:** Do not analyze every bite your loved one decided to take. The one you are caring for needs to be in control of their diet and understand what they can and cannot eat.

**Support, Don't enable:** Let the one your caring for know you are there for them but you will not assist them in sabotaging their health by skipping glucose checks or by letting them eat junk food.

**Be good to yourself:** Get your sleep, eat right, and make time for you! You can't take care of someone else unless you take care of yourself.

**DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR:** When you or your loved one has questions speak with a doctor! There are plenty of misconceptions and what worked for someone you know may not work for your loved one.

**Walk the walk:** Exercise with your loved one! These lifestyle changes help control their diabetes but are good for everyone!

## EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS

This newsletter is to help caregivers who are caring for loved ones who are participating in the Family Caregiver Support Program. This newsletter will be sent to you once a month, to cover a variety of health and caregiving topics. If you have any suggestions or comments please email us at [caremanagement@ursulineseniors.org](mailto:caremanagement@ursulineseniors.org).

## HEALTH TOPIC OF THE MONTH: DIABETES

November is Diabetes Month! According to the American Diabetes Association about 8% of the population has diabetes. It is expected if current trends continue, one out of three Americans, and one in two minorities born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime. Complications that often occur from diabetes include heart disease and stroke, kidney disease, amputations, and blindness. To help prevent these conditions it is important to make sure your loved one is keeping blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol in control to help make a difference in reducing their risk for heart attack or stroke. Annual dilated eye exam, foot exams, blood pressure checks can help prevent blindness, amputations, heart disease, kidney disease, and strokes keeping your loved one healthy longer!



### **Type 1 and Type 2: What's the Difference?**

#### *What is Type 1 Diabetes?*

Type 1 Diabetes is a disorder in which the body does not produce insulin. Insulin is a hormone that aids in moving sugar from the blood to the cells. This type of diabetes can be due to a virus or autoimmune disorder in which the body does not recognize an organ as its own and attacks it. In this case the body attacks the pancreas where insulin is made. This type of diabetes is usually diagnosed before age 40.

#### *What about Type 2 Diabetes?*

Type 2 Diabetes is when insulin in the body is less efficient at moving sugar out of the bloodstream. Some sugar is moved out of the blood, just not as effectively compared to a person without Diabetes. High blood sugar is a result of this. Type 2 Diabetes used to be thought of as the adult onset type of diabetes. However, a lot of children are now being diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes.

The symptoms of **Type 1 Diabetes** may be relatively easy to detect in your loved one if you are a caregiver. The symptoms are:


- Frequent urination, which may be more noticeable at night. Some people who have been independent using the toilet may start wetting the bed during naps or at night.
- Extreme thirst and a dry mouth.
- Weight loss.
- Increased hunger (possibly).

The symptoms for **Type 2 Diabetes** are often more subtle and are often attributed to obesity or aging:

- Blurry vision
- Infections
- Altered Mental Status
- Poor Wound Healing



The ADA’s Diabetes Food Pyramid groups foods according to their carbohydrate and protein content. This chart is also broken-down by the frequency of each food group in the meals of a diabetic person. Ideally, the idea is to have about one consistent carbohydrate content per serving. Watching your serving size is vital to maintaining healthy blood glucose levels; for more information, visit the ADA’s website: [www.ADA.org](http://www.ADA.org)

	<p><b>Fats, sweets, and alcohol</b>— Potato chips, candy, cookies, cakes, crackers, and fried foods belong to this group. Keep your servings of these foods small and save <b>them for a special treat.</b></p>	
	<p><b>Meat and meat substitutes—4 to 6 ounces per day, divided between meals.</b> Cut all the visible fat off the meat before cooking or eating, and keep the portion sizes small (a 3-ounce serving is the size of a deck of playing cards). Meat replacements include tofu, eggs, dried beans, cheese, cottage cheese, and nut butters.</p>	
	<p><b>Milk—2 to 3 servings per day.</b> Again, the emphasis here is on low- or non-fat milk.</p>	
	<p><b>Fruit—2 to 4 servings per day.</b> The ADA emphasizes blackberries, cantaloupe, strawberries, oranges, apples, bananas, peaches, pears, apricots, and grapes</p>	
	<p><b>Vegetables—at least 3 to 5 servings per day.</b> Spinach, chicory, sorrel, Swiss chard, broccoli, cabbage, bok choy, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, kale, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce all belong to this group</p>	
<p><b>Grains and starches—6 to 11 servings per day.</b> This group includes bread, cereal, rice, and pasta. The starchy vegetables potatoes, peas, and corn are included here, as are dried beans such as pinto beans and black-eyed peas, because they have a carbohydrate content equivalent to one slice of bread. They should be counted as carbohydrates for the meal plan.</p>		

**Need something sweet for after Thanksgiving dinner? Here’s a delicious treat that you and your loved ones can enjoy!**

Pumpkin Cookie Bars

(makes 36 bars)

**1 Bar per-serving:** 56 calories, 2 g protein, 2 g total fat, 10 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 0 cholesterol, 39 mg sodium

Diabetic exchanges: ½ carbohydrate (bread/starch)

- ¼ cup liquid egg substitute
- 2 large egg whites
- ¾ cup one to one sugar substitute
- 1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon nonfat dry milk
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 16 ounce can unsweetened pumpkin
- ¼ cup currants
- 2 cups unbleached all purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 13 x 9 inch baking pan with baking spray
2. In a large bowl, combine egg substitute, egg whites, sugar substitute, dry skim milk, canola oil, and pumpkin. Mix for about 2 minutes. Stir in currants.

Sift dry ingredients over the mixture and fold in. Place the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 40 minutes until the batter springs back when touched in the center. Cool the pan and cut into bars. Enjoy!

Diabetic- Lifestyle





## Symptoms understood for Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes:

**Why Fatigue?** Fatigue occurs because the body is unable to process glucose (sugar in the blood) for fuel.

**Unexplained Weight Loss** People with diabetes are often unable to process the calories in the foods that they eat. Monitoring your loved one's weight is important because they may be losing weight even though their loved one appears to eat often and nutritiously.

**Excessive Thirst** (polydipsia) A person with diabetes develops high blood sugar levels. This overloads the kidney's ability to reabsorb the sugar as the blood is filtered to make urine. Excessive urine is made as the kidney dispenses the excess sugar. The body tries to fight this by telling the brain to dilute the blood, which translates into thirst.

**Excessive Urination** (polyuria) Another way the body tries to get rid the extra sugar in the blood is to excrete it in the urine. This can also lead to dehydration because excreting the sugar carries a large amount of water out of the body along with it.

**Poor wound healing** High blood sugar levels prevent white blood cells, which defend the body against bacteria. Also, white blood cells aid in cleaning dead tissue and cells. When these cells do not function properly, wounds take much longer to heal and become infected more frequently. Also, long-standing diabetes is associated with thickening of blood vessels, which prevents good circulation including the delivery of enough oxygen and other nutrients to body tissues.

**Infections** Certain infection syndromes, such as frequent yeast infections of the genitals, skin infections, and frequent urinary tract infections, result from suppression of the immune system by diabetes and by the presence of glucose in the tissues, and which allows bacteria to grow well. They can also be an indicator of poor blood sugar control in a person known to have diabetes.

**Altered mental status** Agitation, unexplained irritability, inattention, extreme lethargy, or confusion can all be signs of very high blood sugar or hypoglycemia (low sugar). Thus, any of these merit the immediate attention of a medical professional. Call your health care provider or 911.

**Blurry vision** Blurry vision is not specific for diabetes but is frequently present with high blood sugar levels.

## When one is providing care giving services, here are 6 tips to make your services more effective:

1. *Understanding the patient with Diabetes:* It is important as a caregiver to understand both the disease and the challenges your loved one will face.
2. *Special needs of aging parents:* Different stages of life require different stages of care. Find out the specific needs of the elderly when treating them for diabetes.
3. *Be Aware-* Make yourself knowledgeable about different programs; there are support groups for both you as the caregiver and your loved one. There are great networks out there, so take advantage of it! Here are a couple of websites to find these services: [WhatIsSolutionsForCaregivers.com](http://WhatIsSolutionsForCaregivers.com), [www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)
4. *Caregiver wellness:* Take care of yourself. It can be very stressful when caring for someone who has to face the daily challenges of diabetes. Get healthy tips on taking care of your body!
5. *Motivate your loved one:* There are plenty of ways to be a good coach. Find a common ground in which you can tell your care recipient your plans to help them and ways they need your help.
6. *Understand the number:* When caring for someone with diabetes, it is easy to get overwhelmed trying to understand the test results. Talk to your loved one's PCP about interpreting their test results.



**Craving something sweet but have to watch you sugars? Make a smoothie out of fruit and yogurt. This is a good way to avoid unnecessary sugars and still get your daily servings of fruit!**



Here is a quick and healthy recipe:

6 Large Frozen Strawberries  
1/2 cup of fat free plain yogurt  
1 cup of cold Skim Milk

Directions: Blend all ingredients for about 1 minute, or until well blended.

## Caregivers Monitoring Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes

How do I monitor my loved one's blood sugar?- A device used to test blood glucose is a glucose meter. These meters are available at most local pharmacies, but first see if the individual's insurance covers the cost of the meter. Generally, to administer the test, a drop of blood is taken from a finger stick and dropped on the test strip that hangs out of the meter.



The meter then reads the amount of glucose (sugar) present in the blood. The meter will simply tell you the amount of sugar present in the blood immediately at the time of the test. This enables the person's blood sugar to be measured from day to day or even hour to hour.

How often should I measure my loved one's blood sugar?- The person's blood should be checked before meals, after meals, or at bedtime. This is just a general suggestion and the individual's PCP should be checked with first. Frequent and regular tests are important, especially for people who are being administered Insulin.

How do I know if their blood sugar is at a safe level?- Ideal recommended goals for people with Diabetes are:

Before Meals: 90-130 mg/dl

After Meals: less than 180 mg/dl

At Bedtime: 100-140 mg/dl

Besides checking sugar levels, how else can I measure Diabetes?- In addition to frequently checking blood glucose levels, your loved one should be receiving annual foot exams, eye and dental checkups. Kidney and cholesterol checks should also be annual and can be prescribed by your PCP. It is also recommended that the diabetic be given comfortable shoes and that their feet are checked once a day for new cuts, blisters, swelling and red spots.

## Potential Health Complications for Improper Care of Diabetes



The possibility for limb-threatening conditions due to Diabetes is alarming. Diabetic "Ulcers" are one of the most common reasons for leg, foot, and toe amputation in this country, second only to motor vehicle accidents. Luckily, these ulcers do not appear overnight. They are always preceded by a gradual injury to the skin or an unexpected immediate injury to the body. With proper care, these diabetic "ulcers" can be prevented from occurring to your loved one.

Most people who have been living with Diabetes for at least 5 years have experienced some loss of sensation in their feet. This loss of sensation is because prolonged high blood sugar can damage and eventually destroy all sensory nerves in the feet. In conjunction with the nerve damage, the nerves in the feet that control the foot's shape can also be damaged, causing deformities known as "hammer toe" or "claw"; these can appear as a high arch and prominent heads of the bones at the bases of the toe or underside of the foot. The nerves that provide perspiration to the feet are also affected, resulting in painful dry and cracked skin.

Luckily, there are ways care givers can prevent these symptoms from occurring:

1. Never let the diabetic walk around barefoot.
2. Buy shoes or boots late in the day when feet are at their largest size. This prevents shoes being too snug and restricting circulation.
3. Inspect the insides of the diabetic's shoes for foreign objects as well as tears and protruding bumps.
4. Never allow your loved one to wear sandals with the thongs in between the toes.
5. Alternate the individual's shoes at least every 2 days to prevent pressure spots from forming in the shoes.
6. Lubricate the diabetics feet when they are dry with olive oil, any vegetable oil, vitamin E oil, emu oil, mink oil, and emulsified lanolin. Do **NOT** use petroleum jelly (Vaseline), mineral oil, or baby oil, as they are not absorbed by the skin.
7. Keep cigarette out of the environment, as Nicotine can cause closure of the valves that permit blood to enter and nourish the skin.
8. Do **NOT** use heating pads and water bottles, but do make sure that the diabetic is wearing proper shoes and socks when in cold weather.
9. Do **NOT** soak feet in water for more than three to four minutes as this can cause skin tears and leave feet vulnerable to punctures.
10. Do **NOT** attempt to remove any growths, corns or calluses from the diabetics foot; leave that to a Podiatrist.

**Diabetes Support Group**

Cost: Free

UPMC Southside

\*other locations offered

To Register: 412-488-5687

**Diabetes Self management Training**

UPMC McKeesport Lions Diabetes Center

Cost: Free

\*other locations offered

To Register: 412-664-3055

This a three session course that will help those with diabetes will gain knowledge and skills to maintain good health and prevent complications

**Diabetes Education Program**

UPMC Passavant

Cost: varies

To Register: 412-367-5065

This is a four session course that emphasizes on nutrition, preventing complications and goal setting.

The Holidays are fast approaching! Are you having trouble finding holiday recipes your loved one can eat? UPMC McKeesport is offering a FREE **“Holiday Cooking for Diabetes”** class!

**When?** December 3,2009

**Where:** UMPC McKeesport

**Cost:** FREE!

**Time:** 3:30pm-5pm

**To Register please call, 412-444-3055, registration is required**