

## Diabetes Information Your Family Needs to Know

Managing diabetes works best with a team approach. If your family and close friends have information about your diabetes, they will be more able to support your efforts to manage your diabetes.

- Let your family and friends know that you have type 2 diabetes. When you have type 2 diabetes your body makes insulin, but your body doesn't use the insulin properly. Insulin is the hormone that lowers blood sugar. Let them know that since you have type 2 diabetes your blood sugar can get too low (hypoglycemia) or too high (hyperglycemia).
- Make your family aware of how you manage your diabetes. Tell them that you need to plan your meals and physical activity. Let them know if you take medications. Let them know that you need to check your blood sugar regularly and that your health care provider checks your hemoglobin A1C level every few months. This lets you know your average blood sugar level.
- Let them know what kind of medications you are taking. Tell them if you are taking oral medications (pills), insulin, or both. Your medications may need to be changed over time. Diabetes is a progressive condition and the body's ability to make insulin decreases. Make your family aware that at some point you may need to take insulin to manage your blood glucose.
- Tell your family about your meal plan. Let them know that your meal plan helps you manage your blood sugar. Tell them that carbohydrates raise your blood sugar. This doesn't mean that you have to avoid all high carbohydrate foods, but you need to control the serving sizes of what you eat.
- Physical activity can help manage your blood sugar levels. Let your family know that you may need to check your blood glucose levels before and after you are physically active. Ask for your family and friend's encouragement of your physical activity. Better yet, ask them to join you in a walk.
- Your family needs to know the symptoms of low blood sugar. The symptoms of **low blood sugar** are: trembling, sweating, slow thinking, slurred speech, hunger, weakness, a general feeling that something is not right. If you are having these symptoms your family needs to remind you or help you to check your blood sugar. If your blood sugar is low, they need to know what you use to treat your blood sugar if you are not able to treat the low blood sugar yourself.
- Make your family aware of the symptoms of high blood sugar, also. The symptoms of **high blood sugar** are blurred vision, thirst, feeling very tired, and difficulty concentrating. If you are having these symptoms your family should encourage you to check your blood sugar right away. Let them know if you know how to adjust your medication or insulin to lower your blood sugar. If you are ill and your blood sugar is

high your family should know at what blood sugar level (number) to contact your health care provider.

- Your family needs to know the name and contact information of your health care providers.

Your family and close friends will appreciate information about your diabetes. They will feel less worried and they will be able to help you when you need help. People with diabetes can live healthy lives with the support and encouragement of family and friends.

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