

Diabetes and You: Healthy Eyes Matter!

It is important to take good care of your eyes when you have diabetes. Did you know that diabetes can harm your eyes? The good news is that you can take steps to help keep your eyes healthy. The tips below will get you started.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY

Get a dilated eye exam at least once a year and share the results with your primary care doctor.

- > In this exam, you will get eye drops to make your pupils larger. Pupils are the black circles in the middle of your eyes. The drops are painless and help your eye doctor see inside your eyes to look for signs of health problems
- > A dilated eye exam can help your eye doctor find and treat problems to keep you from losing your vision from diabetes
- > Your eye doctor may take pictures of your eyes with a tool called retinal photography. This helps to see the retina, which is at the back part of your eyes
- > Be sure to keep your next eye doctor appointment

Visit your eye doctor right away if you:

- > See little black lines or spots that don't go away
- > See any red spots
- > See red fog
- > Have a sudden change in how clearly you see
- > Take longer than usual to adjust to darkness

HOW CAN DIABETES HARM YOUR EYES?

- > Diabetes is the main cause of blindness among people younger than 74 years



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- > Serious eye problems happen more often among people with diabetes
- > It is important to find and treat eye problems early to protect your vision

WHERE DO I GET A DILATED EYE EXAM?

You should schedule an appointment with an ophthalmologist or an optometrist for your yearly dilated exam. Both of these eye doctors can give you a dilated eye exam and check your eyes. If you need help finding a doctor, call our Member AdvocatesSM at **800-515-2220**.

WHAT KINDS OF EYE DISEASES ARE COMMON AMONG PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?

Retinopathy causes small blood vessels in the retina (at the back of the eye) to get weak and possibly leak blood. This disease can cause blindness if it is not treated. There are no symptoms when this disease starts, so it is important to get your eyes checked regularly.

Cataract causes a “clouding” of the lens of the eye that makes vision blurry. People with diabetes are more likely to get cataracts.

Glaucoma causes pressure in the eye. If it is not treated, glaucoma can cause vision loss or blindness.

MANAGE YOUR ABCs!

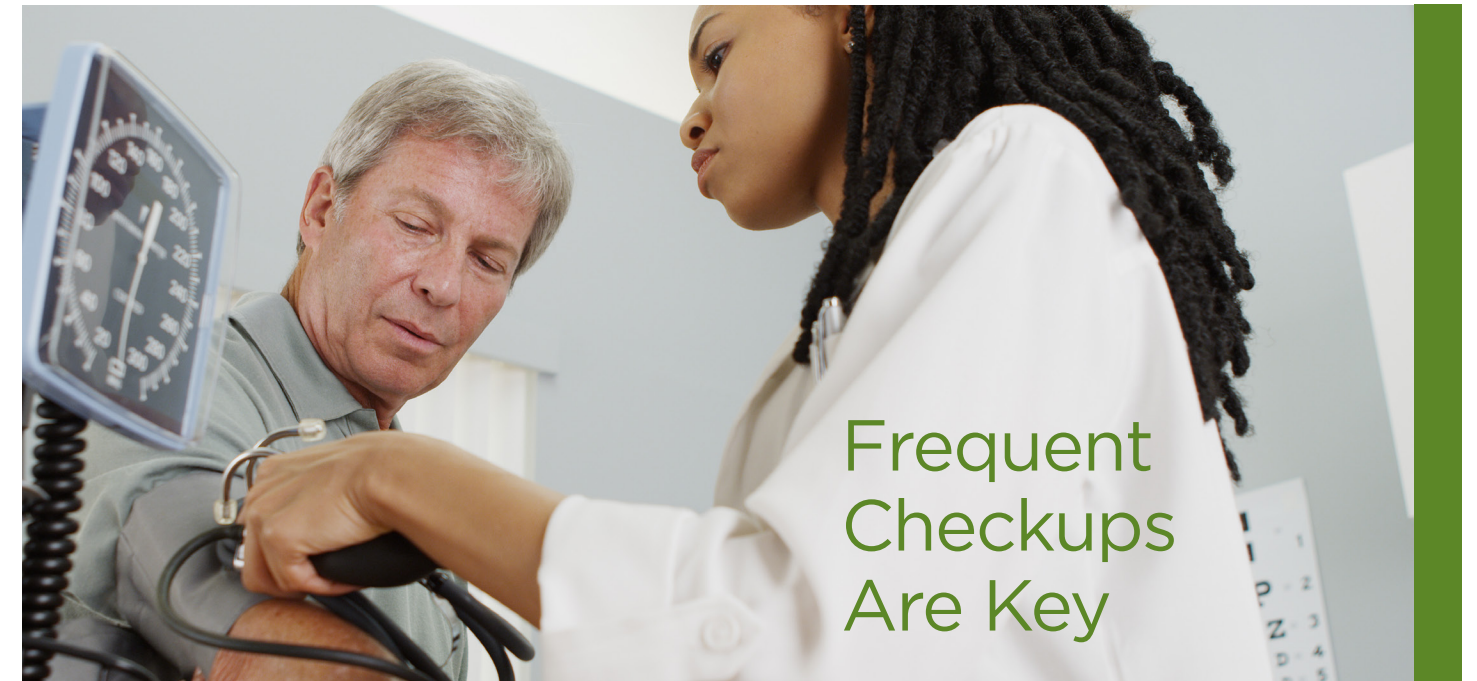
Ask your healthcare providers to help you set and reach goals to manage your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol—also known as the ABCs of diabetes. Teach your family about your diabetes and the ABCs so they can help you, too.

- > **A1c (HbA1c):** The goal for this blood test for many seniors is set to less than 8%, and for the rest of the population is less than 7%, but your doctor might set different goals for you.
- > **Blood pressure:** High blood pressure causes heart disease. The goal is less than 140/90 mm Hg for most people, but your doctor might set different goals for you.
- > **Cholesterol:** Low-density Lipoprotein (LDL) or “bad” cholesterol builds up and clogs your blood vessels. High-density Lipoprotein (HDL) or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- > **Don’t smoke:** Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** for support.

To-Do List for Healthy Eyes

- Get a dilated eye exam from your eye doctor at least once a year. Keep your next eye doctor appointment.
- Keep track of and tell your eye doctor about any changes in how you see.
- Talk with your eye doctor about the best ways to keep your eyes healthy.
- Ask your eye doctor to send your test results to your other doctors after every visit.
- Keep your blood sugar at a healthy level.

Reference: “Tips to Keep Your Eyes Healthy.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Jan. 2014, www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/pdfs/149-healthy-eyes-matter.pdf.



Frequent Checkups Are Key

If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes or asthma, you’re at risk for further health issues down the road. To help catch and treat problems as early as possible, visit your doctor regularly. And get all tests and screenings recommended to safeguard your long-term health.

YOUR PARTNER IN HEALTH

Most people see their doctor about once a year. But if you have a chronic condition, you may need to go more often. It’s best to have a primary care doctor who knows your medical history and can monitor your overall health. They can make any adjustments to your treatment plan and discuss any new symptoms.

Make a list of questions for your doctor before each visit. These might be related to your medications, your symptoms, or changes in your lifestyle. Talking with your doctor often makes it more likely that they will notice changes in your chronic condition and be able to treat them.

If you have diabetes, your doctor may form a care team for you. In addition to your main doctor, the team might include an eye doctor, nurses, a dietitian, and a foot specialist.

PREVENTING FUTURE PROBLEMS

Be sure to follow all your doctor’s recommendations for medical tests, screenings, and physical exams. These tests can detect and prevent new health

problems that might otherwise go unnoticed. The kinds of health tests you may need depend on the chronic condition you have.

People with diabetes, for example, are at risk for eye, nerve, and kidney problems. There is also a greater likelihood of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. In addition to monitoring your blood sugar levels and blood pressure at each appointment, your doctor may suggest:

- > Annual screenings for high cholesterol
- > Eye, teeth, and foot exams
- > Vaccinations against pneumonia and hepatitis B

In the case of chronic lung conditions, regular doctor visits can often spot potential issues long before they start to affect your health. Your doctor will listen to your lungs and your breathing at each visit, but may also recommend:

- > A pneumonia vaccine.
- > Pulmonary function tests, which measure how well you can breathe and how effective your lungs are.

Getting all recommended tests can be the key to protecting your health and living well with your condition.

References: American College of Rheumatology; American Diabetes Association; American Lung Association; National Institutes of Health

Managing Your Meds

For people who have trouble with diabetes, the right medication can do wonders. But if you don't take your medication the right way, it can cause problems. At the very least, you won't get the full benefit of your treatment. So how can you be sure you're taking medication correctly? Follow your doctor's instructions. It sounds simple, but it's not something everyone does. For example, some people don't think they need a particular medication and won't fill the prescription. Others get confused—especially if they take several drugs—about how and when to take medications. And some stop taking their drugs once they feel better—or stop because of unpleasant side effects. But by not taking the full course of medication you've been prescribed, you increase the risk of greater complications from your illness.

TO HELP ENSURE THAT YOU GET THE BEST RESULTS FROM YOUR MEDICATIONS:

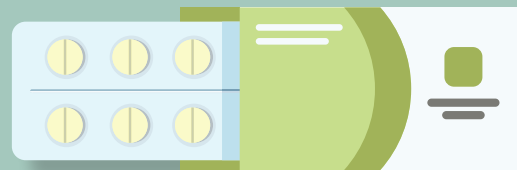
1 Understand why your doctor gave you a prescription. Ask what each drug is for and how you can tell if it's working.



3 Ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you simplify your treatment regimen. There may be a pill dispenser or other system to help you stay on top of your treatment.



2 Report all side effects. Your doctor may be able to alter your dosage, switch you to a different medication, or adjust the timing of your dose.



4 Don't stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor first. That's true even if you're feeling fine. Missing doses can affect your overall treatment.



References: American Pharmacists Association; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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Diabetes Comorbidities: Obesity, High Blood Pressure, and High LDL (Bad) Cholesterol



Comorbidities refers to the presence of another medical condition in addition to the primary disease (diabetes). If you have diabetes, chances are you may have a comorbidity—another condition that may impact your blood sugar level and vice versa. These comorbidities include obesity, high blood pressure, and high LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Let's review the most common comorbidities with diabetes:

OBESITY

Did you know that there is a strong association between obesity and diabetes and they are sometimes referred to with a single term: "diabesity"? It makes sense: More than 85% of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese.

Obesity may increase your blood sugar levels and make it harder to control your diabetes.

If you are overweight or obese, your care manager can help you lose weight by offering advice, support, and insights on nutrition, physical activity,

and changing your feelings about food. And talk to your doctor if you are obese.

What's the difference between being overweight and being obese?

Healthcare professionals use the Body Mass Index (BMI) to see if a patient is at normal weight, overweight, or obese. The BMI measures body fat based on height and weight. Normal weight has a BMI between 18.5 to 24.9. If your BMI is 25 to 29.9, you are considered overweight, while a BMI of 30 or more signals obesity.

To determine your BMI, visit cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adultbmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html and follow the instructions.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, OR HYPERTENSION

If you have high blood pressure along with diabetes, you are not alone. Seventy-one percent of adults age 18 and older with diabetes have high blood pressure, and many of them need medication to keep their blood pressure under control.

WHAT DO YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS MEAN?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as your heart pumps blood. The more force it takes to do the job, the harder your heart has to work and the higher your blood pressure.

The top number in your blood pressure reading is called systolic blood pressure and refers to blood pressure while your heart is pumping blood. The lower number is called diastolic blood pressure and refers to blood pressure when your heart is at rest between beats. (The mm Hg in your reading is the millimeters of mercury that is used to measure blood pressure.)

If you have diabetes, the American Diabetes Association recommends that your blood pressure goal should be 140/90 mm Hg or less. A lower target of 130/80 may be appropriate for some patients.

LDL (OR BAD) CHOLESTEROL

You know that your LDL cholesterol numbers need to be low, but do you know why? Your body needs cholesterol, a waxy fat-like substance, to make

hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you digest your food. Cholesterol travels through your bloodstream in small packages called lipoproteins because they are made of fat (lipids) on the inside and proteins on the outside.

There are two kinds of cholesterol: HDL and LDL. HDL is called good cholesterol because it helps remove LDL cholesterol from your arteries. LDL is called bad cholesterol because it can help block blood flow in your arteries. The higher the LDL level in your bloodstream, the greater your chance of getting heart disease.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that patients with diabetes have an LDL cholesterol level less than 100 mg/dL. If you have a higher number, speak to your doctor and your care manager.

Reference: "Diabetes Comorbidities: Obesity, High Blood Pressure, and High LDL (Bad) Cholesterol." Health Journey Support, AstraZeneca, 2020, www.healthjourneysupport.com/diabetes/diabetes-comorbidities-obesity-hbp-high-ldl-cholesterol-br.



Budget-Friendly Chicken Tostadas

Serves 4 • Serving Size 1 tostada

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cooked chicken breast, shredded
- 3 tbsp salsa
- ½ cup canned pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 tbsp cheddar cheese, reduced fat, shredded
- 4 tostada shells
- ½ avocado, mashed
- 1 cup lettuce, shredded

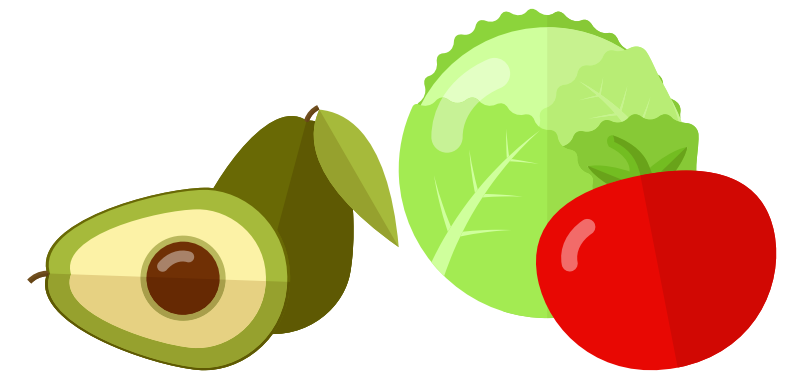
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. In a small bowl, mix together the chicken, salsa, and pinto beans.
2. Place the tostada shells on a baking sheet. Top each tostada shell with 1/2 cup chicken-bean mixture and 1 tablespoon cheese. Bake for 5 minutes or until the cheese is melted.
3. Remove the tostadas from the oven and top each tostada with a spoonful of mashed avocado and 1/4 cup lettuce.

NUTRITION FACTS • Serving Size: 1 tostada

Serving Size 1 tostada	Sodium 230mg
Amount per serving	Total Carbohydrate 20g
Calories 280	Dietary Fiber 4g
Total Fat 10g	Total Sugars 1g
Saturated Fat 2.5g	Protein 27g
Cholesterol 65mg	Potassium 460mg

Reference: "Budget-Friendly Chicken Tostadas." Diabetes Food Hub, American Diabetes Association, www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/budget-friendly-chicken-tostadas.html.





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