

Diabetes complications

Information for patients and families

Diabetes can cause many health problems. By working with your diabetes team to control your blood sugar, you can help prevent or delay these complications.

What are the complications from diabetes?

Having high blood sugar for a long time can cause damage to your blood vessels and nerves. This damage can cause problems, such as:

1. Retinopathy – eye disease
2. Nephropathy – kidney disease
3. Neuropathy – nerve disease
4. Cardiovascular disease – heart disease

What can I do to reduce my risk of complications?

We encourage people to control their ABCDE'S to reduce their risk of developing complications from diabetes. This means controlling your:

- A: A1C - A measure of your blood sugar control
- B: Blood Pressure
- C: Cholesterol
- D: Diet
- E: Exercise
- S: Smoking

To reduce your risk

1. Visit your diabetes doctor (endocrinologist) regularly. Your doctor will help you control your blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure. They will also screen for complications.
2. Get your eyes checked every 1 to 2 years by an ophthalmologist (eye specialist).
3. If you smoke, quit smoking. Ask your doctor for help quitting.
4. Take your insulin and medications that your doctor prescribes.
5. Do physical activity – aim for 150 minutes of activity per week (for example, walking, swimming, biking or running) and resistance training 2 to 3 days per week (for example, lifting weights).
6. Maintain a healthy weight. Ask for help to lose weight.

What are my targets?

Here are your target levels for blood sugars, cholesterol and blood pressure. Ask your doctor to find out your numbers and write them here. If they are too high, ask your doctor what you can do.

A1C	7% or less	My A1C is: _____
Blood pressure	130/80 or less	My BP is: _____
Cholesterol	LDL cholesterol – less than 2.0 mmol/L	My LDL is: _____