

FACING CHANGES

By Linda Bernstein, PharmD

As you age, you may face new problems that come from changes in your life. You may have to live on a fixed income or may not be able to eat as well as you did in the past. You may no longer be able to drive to doctor's office visits or may have trouble walking. You may find it harder to take care of yourself and may live far from family and friends.

Work together with your caregiver and your diabetes team, which may include your healthcare provider, a dietitian and your pharmacist—and follow these 4 daily tips to help you maintain a healthy diabetes lifestyle.

1 Plan healthy meals Make healthy food choices to maintain your best weight. To do this, plan ahead so you can avoid skipping a meal or grabbing a high-fat or sugary snack instead of a healthy one. Avoid foods high in fat and sugar, and try to include a variety of healthy foods in your diet such as fruits, vegetables, fish, and lean cuts of meat, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Bake or broil rather than fry your foods. Eat modest portion sizes at home and when you eat out. Ask your health care provider or a dietitian to help you create a diet that works for you. If you have trouble getting to the market, cooking or paying for the foods you need, ask for support from family members, friends or community help groups.

2 Check glucose levels Check your blood glucose often to help avoid very high and low levels. This will help you control your diabetes. There are many types of blood glucose

THE RISK OF DIABETES GROWS WITH AGE

25%

Nearly 25% of Americans age 60 and older have diabetes.

12,000,000

More than 12 million people age 60 and older have diabetes.

meters on the market. Ask your pharmacist about ones that are easy to use, have easy-to-read screens or talk to you with a special voice option. Also find ones that use the least amount of blood, are lightweight, are covered by your insurance and provide phone or online support.

3 Take your medicines as directed

There are many types of medicines used to treat diabetes. Once your health care team chooses the best ones for you based on your health needs, be sure you know how to use them properly. Know the name, what it is used for, how to take it, what side effects to watch for and what to do if they should occur. Also ask what foods, drugs

and other actions to avoid while using the medicine. Make sure your health care team knows all of the drugs you take, both prescribed ones and over-the-counter products. Don't take any new medicine if you don't know how it will affect your diabetes control or whether they may interact with a medicine you already take. Make sure you have all of your medication needs met when you travel, and keep at least three days of extra supplies on hand in case any problems arise.

4 Keep active Ask your health care team what type and how much activity is best for you. Activity will help you keep your glucose level in check and is a great way to lower stress.

DIABETES CARE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Get yearly eye exams.
- Have your kidneys checked, along with your blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Care for teeth, gums, skin and feet.
- Get a yearly flu shot, and if you are over 65, you may need the pneumonia vaccine.

