

Diabetes & You

Important News For Seniors With Diabetes

(NAPSA)—Recently, the approximately 10.9 million American seniors on Medicare¹ who live with diabetes were alerted to new changes that could impact access to their blood glucose testing supplies.

Many people with diabetes use these supplies—including blood glucose meters and testing strips—to monitor their blood glucose (also known as “blood sugar”). Learning to use and maintain a blood glucose meter usually requires practice, and, over time, patients often become very comfortable with a particular meter. This is important, because consistent blood glucose monitoring is critical to help people with diabetes track blood glucose levels, identify the best approach to control their diabetes, and avoid the potentially serious complications of the disease.²

Medicare Changes

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently instituted a new program that reduces Medicare reimbursement for certain diabetes testing supplies, including blood glucose test strips, for people with diabetes.³

These changes could limit seniors’ access to their preferred diabetes testing supplies—those they’re comfortable using and that their doctors recommend. CMS may suggest that patients switch to unfamiliar products, causing confusion or frustration. Or worse, according to a survey by the American Association of Diabetes Educators,⁴ patients who can no longer access the products they’re comfortable using may test their blood glucose levels less frequently or stop testing altogether. This could potentially result in poor blood glucose control.



Medicare changes for blood glucose supplies need not cause seniors with diabetes to test their blood glucose less frequently or stop testing. Support services are available!

Finding Support

A number of resources are available to help seniors with diabetes understand and manage the Medicare changes and make it easier for them to access their familiar supplies or, alternatively, find new products that are both appropriate for them and affordable. The American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org) provides comprehensive information and guidance regarding the changes. Many blood glucose testing suppliers provide free training and support services for seniors who either decide to switch products or want to continue using their familiar supplies.

To help seniors navigate through these changes, the global health care company Abbott has enhanced its FreeStyle Promise[®] diabetes support program to provide new resources and support services to Medicare patients. Seniors with diabetes, their doctors and caregivers can learn more about Abbott’s FreeStyle Promise program at <http://www.freestylecoveredbymedicare.com> and 1-855-578-2660.

¹<http://www.diabetes.org/advocate/our-priorities/health-care/medicaid-and-medicare.html>

²<http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/Living-with-Diabetes/Type-1-Diabetes/Managing-Type-1-Diabetes/Blood-Glucose-Monitoring/>. Accessed July 26, 2013

³<http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Outreach/Partnerships/Downloads/DMEPOS/BeneFactSheetNatMailOrderProgApril201311634.pdf>

⁴http://www.diabeteseducator.org/export/sites/dade/_resources/Advocacy/AADE_AADE_SURVEY.pdf

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