

Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes

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(NAPSA)—Here's what we
know: more than 29 million Amer-



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icans have diabetes, up from the previous estimate of 26 million in 2010. We also know that one in four people with diabetes is unaware that he or she has the disease. If left undiagnosed or untreated, diabetes can lead to serious health problems, including heart attack and stroke. That's why the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, wants people with diabetes to understand that having diabetes increases their chances for heart disease.

The good news is that people with diabetes can lower their chances of having diabetes-related heart problems by managing their Diabetes ABCs. These include:

- **A** for the A1C test (A-one-C). This is a blood test that measures a person's average blood sugar (glucose) level over the past three months.
- **B** for Blood pressure.
- **C** for Cholesterol.
- **S** for Stop smoking. If you do smoke, you can call 1-800-QUITNOW for free assistance.

If you have diabetes, your ABC goals will depend on how long you have had the disease and any other health problems you may have. The important message to

remember is that taking care of your diabetes can also help you take care of your heart. Simply put, we want you to *Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes*.

So what can you do if you have diabetes? Talk to your doctor and develop an action plan that is right for you. Here are key points to remember, as well as some questions to ask your doctor:

- Goals for blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol are different for each person and should be based on your diabetes and health status.
- Ask your doctor:
 - What are my blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers?
 - What should they be?
 - What actions can I take to reach my ABC goals?



People with diabetes can lower their chances of having diabetes-related heart problems, says Dr. Rodgers.

- Your action plan should also include weight management through healthy eating, regular activity, and taking medications as prescribed.

We also know that 86 million Americans (more than one in three U.S. adults) have prediabetes, a condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal—but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Having prediabetes puts you at high risk for type 2 dia-

betes. It also puts you at risk for a heart attack and stroke. If you have prediabetes, research has shown that you can delay or prevent the development of type 2 diabetes by making simple but important lifestyle changes. For instance, losing just 7 percent of your body weight (which is about 15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds) and being more physically active by walking 30 minutes a day for at least five days a week can reduce your chances of developing type 2 diabetes by more than half (58 percent).

Whether you have diabetes or prediabetes, there are similar lifestyle changes that can go a long way to prevent or delay health problems. For example:

- Choose healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, fish, chicken and turkey without the skin, dry beans and peas, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese.
- Drink water instead of juices or sodas.

• When eating a meal, fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables; one quarter with a lean protein, such as beans, or chicken or turkey without the skin; and one quarter with a whole grain, such as brown rice or whole wheat pasta.

• Every day, write down what you eat and drink and the number of minutes you are active.

• Review your meal and activity plans every day. This will help you reach your goals.

The National Diabetes Education Program offers many resources to help people with diabetes take important steps to stay healthy and prevent diabetes-related heart problems. Please visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org.