

TYPE 2 and YOU

Tips for better understanding your diabetes

What You Can Learn From This Handout...

The connection between type 2 diabetes and heart and blood vessel problems

TYPE 2 DIABETES: THE HEART CONNECTION

You may know that untreated type 2 diabetes can lead to problems with your eyes, kidneys, feet, and legs. But type 2 diabetes can cause other problems, too. That same insulin resistance that helps cause type 2 diabetes also helps create problems within your heart and blood vessels, leading to cardiovascular disease (CVD).

What Is CVD?

CVD is a disease of the heart and blood vessels that can cause heart attacks, strokes, and coronary artery disease. People with diabetes have CVD more often, and earlier, than most people without diabetes. Coronary artery disease is caused by narrowing or blockage of the blood vessels that go to your heart. If those blood vessels become blocked by fatty deposits, the blood supply is reduced or cut off. Reducing the blood supply to your heart can cause a heart attack. Reducing the blood supply to your brain can cause a stroke.

What Causes CVD?

The main cause of CVD is called atherosclerosis, when your blood vessels clog up. It's no accident that atherosclerosis is common in people with diabetes. A lot of the problems associated with insulin resistance—like high blood sugar, high blood pressure, too much “bad” LDL cholesterol (LDL-C), and not enough “good” HDL cholesterol (HDL-C)—are all problems with atherosclerosis, too. Cholesterol is tiny blobs of fat that float around in your bloodstream. Not all of it is bad, but too much of the bad kind can be a problem.

Taking care of your diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol can help you lower your chances of developing CVD. Your healthcare provider will partner with you to set personalized treatment goals related to your type 2 diabetes (ABC targets for most people with diabetes are shown in the box at right). With lifestyle changes and medications prescribed by your healthcare provider, you can help to lower your CVD risk by meeting the goals that you and your healthcare provider agree upon.

YOUR DIABETES TARGETS

ABC Category	ADA Goal	Your Goal	Your Measurement Now
A1C	Less than 7%		
Blood pressure	140/80 or lower		
HDL-C “good cholesterol”	More than 40 (m) or 50 (f)		
LDL-C “bad cholesterol”	Less than 100		
Triglycerides	Less than 150		

Health information is not clear at times. The Ask Me 3[®] program run by the National Patient Safety Foundation can help. The program gives you three questions to ask your healthcare provider during a health care visit, either for yourself or for a loved one. They are:

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

Asking questions can help you be an active member of your health care team.

For more information on Ask Me 3[®], please visit www.npsf.org/askme3.

Ask Me 3 is a registered trademark licensed to the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF). KnowledgePoint360 Group is not affiliated with nor endorsed by NPSF.

ABC TARGETS FOR DIABETES

A is for A1C

A1C tells you your average blood glucose for the past 3 months. Your target A1C should be less than 7%.

B is for Blood Pressure

When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder. Your target blood pressure should be 140/80 mm Hg or lower.

C is for Cholesterol

Cholesterol numbers tell you about the fat in your blood. HDL-C helps protect your heart. High LDL-C levels can narrow your blood vessels. Triglycerides are another form of fat. High levels of these can raise your risk for heart attack or stroke.

REFERENCE: ADA. Standards of medical care in diabetes—2014. *Diabetes Care*. 2014;37(suppl 1):S14-S80.

Compliments of
Your Healthcare Provider