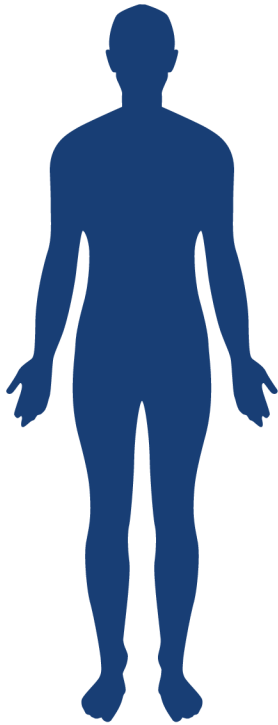




# Reducing Complications

High levels of **glucose** in the blood can cause damage to the **blood vessels** and **nerves** in your body and cause complications in certain areas;



## Heart and blood vessels

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Poor circulation
- Congestive heart failure



## Skin

- Infection
- Dryness



## Kidneys

- Kidney disease
- Kidney failure



## Eyes

- Vision loss
- Retinopathy
- Macular edema



## Teeth

- Dry mouth
- Tooth loss
- Thrush
- Gingivitis
- Periodontitis



## Feet and legs

- Neuropathy
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Peripheral artery disease



## Sexual function

- Sexual performance
- Sexual enjoyment

## The Steps to Reduced Complications

Keeping your glucose levels in your target range and your A1C less than 7% are the first steps in preventing complications. Check with your healthcare team about personal targets, but typical glucose targets are:

- Before meals: 80-130 mg/dL
- Bedtime: 90-150 mg/dL
- 2-3 hours after meals: less than 180 mg/dL

Other steps you can take towards preventing complications are:

- Keep your blood pressure below 130/80 mmHg.
- Keep your LDL cholesterol below 100 or less than 70 if you have heart disease.
- Be active, get your body moving. Adults need 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity and 2 days of muscle strengthening activity each week.
- Choose hearty healthy meals most of the time. We can always improve what we eat. Schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian to learn more.

## Getting to the **Heart** of it

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- If you smoke, make a plan to stop. Ask your PCP or your endocrinologist for help.
- Keep your A1C, blood pressure, and lipids in the goal range. Talk to your healthcare provider about your goals.
- Ask about medications to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol if these are high.
- Be physically active: A daily walk is a step in the right direction. Aim to be active at least 30 minutes a day.
- Choose heart-healthy foods that are low in saturated fat and sodium and high in fiber. Eliminate trans fats. If your meal plan has not been reviewed recently, ask to meet with a Registered Dietitian.



## Keep an **Eye** on it

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

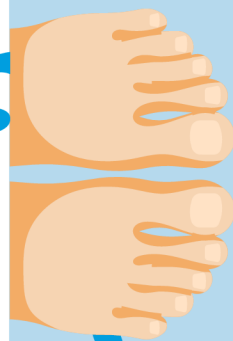
- Have a dilated eye exam every year.
- Be alert to any changes in your vision. Floating spots or flashing lights, distortion of straight lines, or blurred vision are all symptoms to be aware of. Report these changes to your eye doctor promptly.



## Best **Foot** Forward

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- Check your feet every day for dry skin, cracks, or cuts. Apply lotion if they are dry and talcum powder if they sweat.
- File your toenails using an emery board and round the edges. Never use a razor blade or scissors that may cut the skin.
- Ask your doctor to check your feet carefully during your routine visits.
- Protect your feet. Wear well-fitting, closed-toe shoes. Buy new shoes towards the end of the day, especially if your feet tend to swell. Look for good quality canvas or leather that allows the foot to breath.
- Call your doctor if you see any problems such as cuts, drainage, redness, swelling, or pain that does not improve in 24-48 hours.
- Ask for a referral to a foot doctor (podiatrist) if you have corns or thick calluses, poor circulation, nerve damage, thick toenails, or if you are unable to reach or see your feet.





## Keeping your **Skin** in the game

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- Keep skin clean by bathing or showering daily using warm (not hot) water
- Use a mild, moisturizing soap
- Prevent dryness by using an unscented moisturizer on your skin, except between your toes



## **Kidney** Care

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- Get a urine test for microalbumin (tiny amounts of protein) at least once a year.
- Ask about your estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR). It measures your kidney function and tells your level of kidney disease
- Ask about medications that can help protect your kidney function.



## Sink your **Teeth** into it

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- See your dentist or dental hygienist twice a year.
- Brush your teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Call your dentist if your gums appear swollen or puffy, or if you have bleeding after you brush or floss. Mention any symptoms such as dry mouth, loose teeth, or mouth pain.
- If you wear dentures, be sure they are refitted every 5 years



## Diabetes on an **Intimate** Level

### Steps to Reduce your Risk

- Keep your glucose levels and your A1C in your target range.
- Maintain regular physical activity and healthy eating.
- Monitor for symptoms of sexual dysfunction
  - In men; erectile dysfunction, loss of sexual desire, and retrograde ejaculation.
  - In women: vaginal dryness, loss of sexual desire, painful or uncomfortable intercourse, loss of sensation in the genital area, difficulties with orgasm.
- Talk to your healthcare provider to discuss options for sexual difficulties. They may refer you to an urologist, urogynecologist (for women), a sex therapist, and/or psychologist, among others.