

# Diabetes Quick Tips

Managing diabetes properly can be a complicated challenge. With these few steps, you can make positive moves toward controlling your blood sugar, feeling better, and avoiding the complications associated with uncontrolled blood sugar.

## **#1 Know Symptoms of High and Low Blood Sugar**

For most people, a good blood sugar goal is 70-130 mg/dl before meals. Ask your doctor or diabetes educator if this goal is a good one for you. If your blood sugar is high, you may have:

- Thirst
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Dry Mouth
- Tiredness
- Weakness

If you think your blood sugar may be high: check your blood sugar level, drink a lot of fluids without sugar or caffeine. Call your doctor if your blood sugar level is greater than 240 for 2 tests in a 24 hour period or if your blood sugar is greater than 350 at any time.

If your blood sugar is low, you may feel:

- Nervous
- Sweaty
- Hungry
- Dizzy
- Forgetful
- Drowsy
- Irritable

If you think your blood sugar is low: check your blood glucose level and eat a carbohydrate source like 2-4 glucose tablets, 1 cup skim milk, ½ cup juice, or 6 oz. Regular soda. Recheck your blood sugar in 15 minutes. Repeat these steps until your blood sugar is above 70. Then eat a small snack, or if it is mealtime, eat your meal.

## **#2 Take Your Medicine**

Know the name of your medicine, how much you take and when you take it. Always carry a list in your wallet. Take your medicine and insulin as directed by your physician. Ask your pharmacist for help if you don't understand or if you are having problems taking your medicines.

## **#3 Blood Glucose Monitoring**

⇒ Test your blood sugar as directed by your physician or educator. Check it more often if you are sick, or anytime you think it may be too high or too low. If you are having problems ask your physician, educator or pharmacist for help.

⇒ Write your blood sugars in your log book. Note the patterns and effects of food, medicine and exercise on your levels. Use this information to talk with your doctor or educator about changes in your care plan.

**Facts**

*You  
Should  
Know*

#### **#4 Diet**

- ⇒ Eat at least 3 meals or what your dietitian or physician has advised each day.
- ⇒ Eat at regular mealtimes, Do not skip meals and do not eat a large quantity of food at any one time.
- ⇒ Eat a balanced meal consisting of all the food groups. Half of your plate should contain non-starchy vegetables. Limit the starches in your diet to no more than 2-3 small portions per meal.
- ⇒ Choose small, healthy snacks. Your dietitian can give you ideas. Avoid eating junk food or drinking regular soft drinks.
- ⇒ Try to eat fresh fruit instead of drinking fruit juices. Fruit contains natural simple sugar and should be counted as a carbohydrate food in your meal planning.

#### **#5 Activity**

- ⇒ Remember that physical activity and exercise can lower blood sugar levels
- ⇒ Regular exercise strengthens your heart and improves your circulation
- ⇒ Try to exercise after meals to avoid low blood sugars
- ⇒ Remember to use aerobic and resistance exercises. Both types help lower blood glucose in different ways.
- ⇒ Follow your doctor's advice on what type of exercise is appropriate for you

#### **#6 Sick Day Rules**

- ⇒ Continue to take your diabetes medications at your normal scheduled times even if you are unable to eat, Except for the medication Glucophage (Metformin), which you may omit until you are able to eat food again.
- ⇒ When you cannot eat food, you may drink small amounts of regular soft drinks or fruit juices. If your blood sugar is above 180, you should change to sugar-free liquids.
- ⇒ Check blood sugar more often (i.e., at least 3 times per day) and report blood sugar greater than 180 for 2 tests in a 24 hour period.
- ⇒ Call your doctor, if you have been vomiting and have not been able to keep any liquids down for 4 hours. You may need to adjust your diabetes medication.

#### **#7 Call Your Doctor If**

- ⇒ You have two or three low blood sugars (less than 70) in a 48 hour period that do not come back to normal after using the treatment outlined on the front of this sheet.
- ⇒ Blood sugar values are over 240 for more than one day, or any blood sugar greater than 350.
- ⇒ You are too sick to eat or drink and take your diabetes medicine.

#### **#8 The Diabetes Treatment Center**

Improving your blood sugar levels will help decrease problems associated with diabetes. You play the biggest part in keeping your blood sugar in a good range.

You may benefit from diabetes education if you are:

- new to diabetes,
- someone with blood sugars often over 140 mg/dl, or
- someone with questions related to controlling your diabetes,

The Diabetes Treatment Center is part of Saint Joseph Healthcare. Here, Diabetes Educators can help you learn ways to do your part to improve and maintain good blood sugar control. If you feel like you could benefit from our services, please ask your doctor for a referral or call us directly at (859) 313-2958 or 1-888-801-0004.