

THE ABCs OF DIABETES *control*

If you have diabetes, three key steps can help you lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. Follow these “ABCs”:

A is for **A1C test**, which is short for hemoglobin A1C. This test measures your average blood glucose (blood sugar) over the last three months. It lets you know if your blood glucose level is under control. Get this test at least twice a year. Number to aim for: Below 7.

B is for **blood pressure**. The higher your blood pressure, the harder your heart has to work. Get your blood pressure measured at every doctor’s visit. Numbers to aim for: Below 130/80.

C is for **cholesterol**. “Bad” cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries. Get your LDL cholesterol tested at least once a year. Number to aim for: Below 100.

Be sure to ask your health care provider:

- ♥ What are my ABC numbers?
- ♥ What should my ABC target numbers be?
- ♥ What actions should I take to reach my ABC target numbers?

To lower your risk of heart attack and stroke, also take these steps:

- ♥ Get physical activity every day.
- ♥ Eat less salt, cholesterol and fat, especially saturated fat.
- ♥ Eat more fiber. Choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans.
- ♥ Stay at a healthy weight.
- ♥ If you smoke, stop.
- ♥ Take medicines as prescribed.
- ♥ Ask your doctor about taking aspirin.
- ♥ Ask others to help you manage your diabetes.

Preventing Diabetes

If you have “pre-diabetes”-higher-than-normal glucose levels-you are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. *But you can take steps to improve your health, and delay or possibly prevent diabetes.* A recent study found that many overweight, pre-diabetic people dramatically reduced the risk of developing diabetes by following a lower-fat, lower-calorie diet and getting 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days per week. Some encouraging results of the study:

- ♥ Overall, people who achieved a 5-7 percent weight loss (about 10-15 pounds) through diet and increased physical activity (usually brisk walking) reduced their risk of diabetes by 58 percent over the next three years.
- ♥ For people over age 60, these lifestyle changes reduced the risk of developing diabetes by 71 percent.
- ♥ Benefits were seen in all of the racial and ethnic groups that participated in the study-African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian and Pacific Islander.
- ♥ People taking the diabetes drug metformin (Glucophage) reduced their risk of developing the disease by 31 percent.

These findings suggest that you can act to prevent or delay diabetes, even if you are at high risk for the disease. For more information on how to choose and cook low fat foods, get more physical activity, and achieve a healthy weight, start “Taking Control”