

The ABCs of diabetes control

Use these ABCs of diabetes control as a reminder of all the important factors for good diabetes control.

A1C test—An A1C test should be given at least twice a year. A1C refers to the lab blood test for hemoglobin A1C. Hemoglobin A1C should be under 7, to indicate good control. The A1C test shows if glucose control efforts are being adequately carried out.

Blood pressure—Blood pressure must be taken during each medical visit. Indications and medical recommendations are very important, including having a blood pressure measurement and a urine test to observe the presence of glucose or the protein albumin in the urine.

Cholesterol and lipids—These lab tests should be done once a year. If cholesterol is higher than 200 mg/dL, a person has a major risk of developing cardiovascular complications. This risk may be reduced by a diet low in fat and/or with medications.

Diabetes education—Everyone needs ongoing education in nutrition, self-management, self-monitoring, and prevention of complications. People with diabetes need to know the number of calories they should consume and how to use food to prepare adequate and nutritious meals. Basic courses in nutrition and cooking are important.

Eye examinations—All people with diabetes need to have a dilated eye exam at least once a year, or more frequently if their eye care professional has diagnosed an eye complication.

Foot examinations—Feet can also be affected by diabetes. People with diabetes should take a minute to look at their feet daily and check for sores, cuts, or bruises.

Glucometer—Use a glucometer frequently. Learning how to use the glucometer is very important. Every person with diabetes should learn to use the glucometer and incorporate it into their self-management of diabetes.

Health maintenance—Moderate exercise, including walking for 30 minutes at least five times a week, is important for health maintenance. Alternative exercise programs are specially designed for people with diabetes. Also, people with diabetes are more susceptible to contracting viral or bacterial infections during an outbreak. To decrease this risk, immunizations are important. Influenza and pneumonia vaccines should be part of the regular care of a person with diabetes.