



INSIDE:  
Your diabetes  
action plan



Summer 2013

# Lifestyles for Diabetes

## Dessert and diabetes? It is possible to have both

Many people believe sugar causes diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, that's simply not true. Whether you eat too much steak or too much cake, it's the overall intake of too many calories that counts.

Due in part to this misconception, people with diabetes were told to cut sugar from their diets. However, it's the total amount of carbohydrates that you consume, more than the type of carbs, that affects how high your blood glucose levels rise.

But, that doesn't give you the OK to eat all the sugar you want. It does mean you can work sugar and small portions of sugar-containing desserts into your diet. Here's how:

- **Make a trade.** If you want to have a treat, substitute it for another carb you would have eaten. Want a small piece of Mom's birthday cake? Skip the potato salad at dinner.
- **Revise your recipes.** Most can easily be reworked to be more diabetes-friendly. For instance, update dessert recipes by cutting the sugar by one-third to one-half. In its place, add sweet spices such as vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg or use sugar substitutes. Reduce the fat in dessert

recipes by replacing oil or butter in baked goods with applesauce or puréed prunes.

- **Watch your portions.** Keep serving sizes of sweet desserts small. Share with a friend or family member. Skip the whipped cream or vanilla ice cream topping on your pie.
- **Walk it off.** Stay physically active. It's a great way to keep your glucose in check. Before beginning any activities, discuss with your doctor how exercise can complement your overall treatment plan.

### Care For Your Health®

Our personalized — and confidential — program *Care For Your Health* helps you manage the challenges you face while living with a chronic condition. To get started:

- Visit your plan's website.
- Log in as a member.
- Click on the *Health and Wellness* tab.
- Click *BlueHealthConnection*®.
- Click *My Digital Health Coaching* and then click *Care For Your Health*.

# Health checks

Every year, ask your doctor about these wellness checks. You may need some of them more than once a year.

- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ HbA1c
- ✓ Total cholesterol (HDL, LDL, triglycerides)
- ✓ Urine microalbumin
- ✓ Diabetes eye exam
- ✓ Dental exam
- ✓ Foot exam

Also, check with your doctor to see if your pneumonia shot is up to date.

## Reminder:

### Plan ahead for flu season

Hard to believe, but flu season isn't that far away. Having a chronic condition like diabetes puts you at increased risk for flu complications. Be sure to make an appointment with your doctor this fall to receive your flu shot.

## Real readers, real advice

Who knows more about living with diabetes than those facing the same daily issues as you? We'd love to share your feedback to help support and inspire other members living with diabetes. Just email us at [bcnccm@bcbsm.com](mailto:bcnccm@bcbsm.com) with any tips you'd like to share with other readers.

## Everyday factors that may affect your diabetes

Diabetes can affect any part of your body. That means that if you have diabetes, you may face other health problems, such as heart disease or kidney disease. While that can be scary, there are things you can do to keep yourself healthier.

Complications from diabetes can result from blood sugar changes that are affected by everyday activities and occurrences. But that's actually good news. That means you have the power to take charge of your health.

### Food for thought

More than any other nutrient, carbohydrates — no matter the type — affect your blood sugar. But what carbs are best? The Harvard School of Public Health suggests replacing high-glycemic carbs, such as white bread and instant oatmeal, with low-glycemic carbs, such as whole-grain breads and cereals. This can significantly reduce unhealthy post-meal blood sugar spikes.

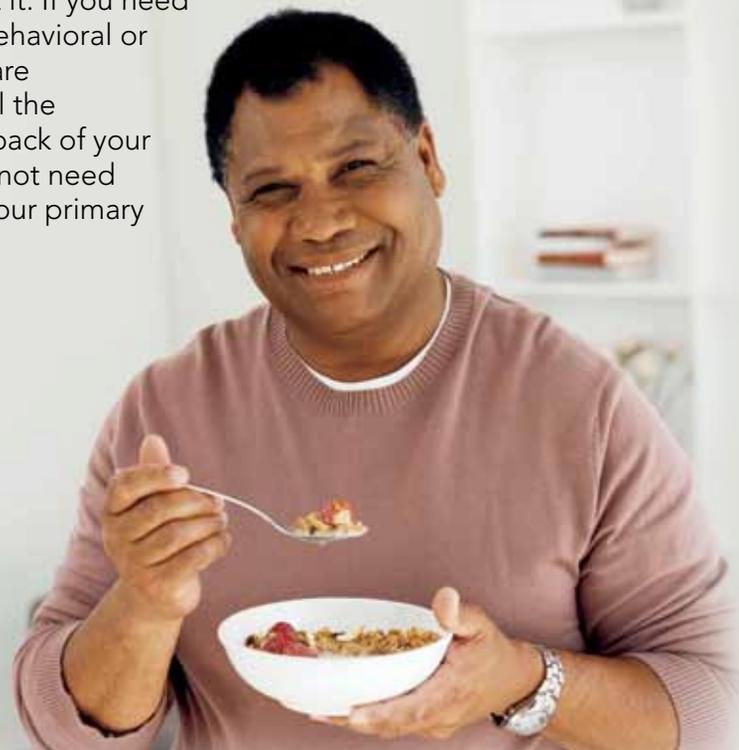
Alcohol can raise or lower your blood sugar, too. Talk to your doctor about whether alcohol is safe for you. If it is, limit your alcohol intake to one drink per day.

### Steps to a safe workout

Regular exercise helps control blood sugar. To keep your blood sugar from dipping too low, check it — and if necessary, have a small snack — before exercising. Keep food handy, too. After exercising, recheck your blood sugar.

### Your mental state matters

Feeling overwhelmed? If so, talk to your doctor. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reveals that people with diabetes are about twice as likely to have depression as those without it. If you need help finding a behavioral or mental health care professional, call the number on the back of your ID card. You do not need a referral from your primary care physician.





# My diabetes action plan

Ask your doctor to help you fill out this form at each visit. It will help you manage your diabetes.

My personal goal	My results today	What I can do
Daily blood sugar: _____ By date: _____ A1C: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Check my blood sugar every day <input type="checkbox"/> Follow my meal plan <input type="checkbox"/> See my doctor twice a year for tests <input type="checkbox"/> Take my medicine
Blood pressure: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Follow my meal plan <input type="checkbox"/> Limit salt to 1 tsp. a day <input type="checkbox"/> Take my medicine
BMI: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Choose healthy foods
Weekly exercise: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Ask my doctor about an exercise plan
LDL cholesterol: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Eat a heart-healthy diet <input type="checkbox"/> Get a cholesterol test at least once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Take my medicine
Tobacco use: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Join a smoking cessation program
Alcohol use: _____ By date: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Limit my alcohol use

This diabetes plan was created for:

\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

(continued on next page)



# Banish blisters with these five tips

Blisters aren't just a minor bother for those with diabetes. Preventing injuries to your lower limbs is important. Nerve damage may make it hard for you to feel your feet. Diabetes may decrease blood flow to your extremities. Blisters can easily lead you down the road to serious foot sores and even amputation. But you can keep putting your best foot forward with these tips:



## 1. Get familiar with your feet.

Check them every evening for cuts, blisters, red spots and sore toenails. If you have trouble bending over to look at your feet, ask a loved one for help or use a mirror.



## 2. Take charge of your diabetes.

This will prevent complications with your feet and throughout your body. Eat right, exercise and follow your doctor's instructions for managing your blood sugar.



## 3. The right shoes matter.

Never go barefoot — and pick shoes that fit comfortably and protect your feet. Since you might not be able to feel shoes rubbing and blisters forming, avoid pointy shoes that crowd your toes. And never buy too-tight shoes hoping they'll stretch. You might consider asking your health care team if special shoes might be right for you.



## 4. Practice foot hygiene.

The National Diabetes Education Program recommends you wash your feet every day in warm water. Use a soft towel to pat them dry, taking care to reach between toes. Smooth a thin layer of lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between toes. Trim your toenails often, cutting straight across. If you have difficulty trimming your toenails, talk to your doctor.



## 5. Visit your doctor.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, following a foot care program can help reduce amputation rates by 45 to 85 percent. Taking care of your feet is a step in the right direction. Make sure your doctor checks your feet at every appointment. Take your shoes and socks off right away as a reminder. And let your health care team know if you spot signs of trouble or if your feet hurt or feel numb.



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### Health or wellness or prevention information

If you have questions about this program, have received this information in error, would prefer not to receive further information or want to inquire about resources for members with special needs, please call:

**1-800-392-4247 | 1-800-257-9980 (TTY)**

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

For Customer Service, please call the number listed on the back of your ID card.

#### > HEALTHY LIVING AND GOOD EATING

### Cherry Swirl "Pudding"

Servings: 4

During the dog days of summer, recipes that let you prepare a dish without turning on the oven are a blessing. That's why you'll love the Cherry Swirl "Pudding." It substitutes fat-free Greek-style yogurt for the standard sugar and cream used in classic pudding mixes and offers the surprising addition of shredded coconut.

- 2 cups pitted sweet black cherries
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ¼ cup dried, unsweetened coconut
- 12 ounces plain fat-free Greek-style yogurt

Halve the cherries. Mix the cherries, vanilla extract and coconut into the yogurt. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Spoon into stemmed cocktail glasses.



**Nutritional information per serving:** 100 calories; 16 g carbohydrates; 6 g protein; 3 g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 22 mg sodium; 2 g fiber.



