

Steer clear of diabetes complications

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The high blood glucose levels or hyperglycaemia in uncontrolled diabetes can cause damage to both nerves and blood vessels. Because blood vessels supply blood to various organs, this can result in serious complications such as kidney failure, eye disease, stroke, cardiac arrest and angina, foot disease such as gangrene as well as nerve disease including erectile dysfunction.

Check for pre-diabetes if you are:

- 45 years or older and overweight/ not overweight
- If you are under 45 years, but overweight, your risk for diabetes increases.

Checking for prediabetes is very important because the symptoms are not always obvious and, often, diabetes can go undetected and untreated for years. If you have pre-diabetes, it means you might get type 2 diabetes and you are at a high risk of getting heart disease or stroke.

Delay or prevent type 2 diabetes

Did you know that 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity along with a five to 10 per cent weight loss can lower your risk of diabetes by 58 per cent?

You can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with nutritious eating, regular physical activity, and moderate weight loss. Balancing all of these is the cornerstone of prevention. Reducing calories and increasing physical activity must go hand-in-hand.

Weight loss happens when your energy output (activity) is greater than energy input (calories). You have to burn 3,500 calories to lose one pound (0.45kg)! A combination of meal planning and physical activity would be most effective.

Nutritious eating is limiting saturated fats (butter, cheese, fatty meats), cutting back on the total amount of fat (less oils, salad dressing, fried foods), eating more fibre, eating fruits and vegetables at every meal.

Regular, moderate physical activity, 30 minutes a day, will help you to reduce weight gradually. Brisk walking (aim for 10,000 steps a day), cycling, jogging, and dancing every day will also keep your blood sugar level under control.

Regular physical activity will help lower your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol. It also strengthens your heart, lungs and bones and increases muscle tone and stamina as well as improves your sleep, and blood flow to your brain. It decreases stress, and keeps you happy.

Heart-Healthy Eating Tips

- Eat breakfast
- Eat smaller portions
- Choose non-fat or low-fat dairy products
- Choose lean meats
- Remove the visible fat from meat
- Enjoy leafy vegetables along with whole grains and lean meat or beans
- Snack between meals

Increase your activity

- Be active every day
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator
- Take 5- to 10-minute walks after each meal
- Go dancing, cycling with family or friends

Monitor your progress

- Keep a diary of your eating habits and physical activity
- Track your weight loss
- Be patient and don't give up