

# Caregiver Assistance News

*“Caring for You - Caring for Others”*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,  
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

**www.aaa7.org** **Helping You Age Better!**



**APRIL 2018**

## Diabetes Care and Precautions

Diabetes can affect many parts of the body, and can lead to serious problems such as heart disease, blindness, kidney damage, and lower-limb amputations. People with diabetes can reduce these risks with the help of their doctors, families and caregivers. This means controlling the levels of blood glucose (blood sugar), blood pressure, and blood lipids (cholesterol), and receiving regular preventive care.

Older people with poor control of blood sugar levels often have problems with thinking, depression and other disabilities. If you are caring for an older person who has diabetes, be sure they see the doctor on a regular basis to be evaluated. Good diabetes care can help reduce the risk of complications.



**Blood Sugar**—Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy. In order to keep the amount of blood sugar in the blood from becoming too high, people with diabetes take supplemental insulin in pill form, by pump, inhaled or by injection. Caregivers are often responsible for blood sugar testing.

**Insulin Shock**—Blood sugar levels can also become too low from giving too much insulin or from poor diet, resulting in a serious condition called insulin shock or hypoglycemia. Signs include: shaking, nervousness, feeling faint, or even passing out. Call 911 immediately if the person faints and is unresponsive.

**Blood Pressure and Cholesterol**—People with diabetes are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Lowering blood pressure and cholesterol through better diet and medication can help limit this risk. Lowering blood pressure also reduces stress on the kidneys.

**Weight Control and Exercise**—Eating regular, balanced meals that include carefully measured portions can help keep diabetes under control. Caregivers should limit the amount of candy, cookies, and other desserts given to someone with diabetes. Always read food labels for hidden sugars in unexpected places such as crackers, bread crumbs, and ketchup. Sometimes, simple measures such as watching the diet, losing weight, and increasing exercise can bring diabetes under control.

**Eye Care**—People with diabetes should see the eye doctor regularly. Laser therapy can reduce the possibility of severe vision loss caused by diabetes.

## Signs of Diabetes

Some people with diabetes have no symptoms until they find out from a routine blood test.

Some symptoms—

- Feeling very thirsty
- Urinating often
- Feeling very hungry or tired
- Losing weight without dieting
- Sores that heal slowly
- Dry, itchy skin
- Pain, tingling  
or loss of  
feeling in  
the feet
- Blurry  
vision



## Healthy Eating

Eating the right amount of food will also help manage blood glucose level and weight. Portion size examples:



- 1 serving of meat or poultry is a deck of cards.
- 1 3-ounce serving of fish is a checkbook.
- 1 serving of cheese is six dice.
- 1/2 cup of cooked rice or pasta is a rounded handful or a tennis ball.
- 1 serving of a pancake or waffle is a DVD.
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter is a ping-pong ball.
- Drink water instead of sweetened beverages. If you drink alcohol, drink moderately—no more than one drink a day if you're a woman or two drinks a day if you're a man.

Source: *The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Health Information Center*

## Upcoming Diabetes Classes

*Adams County - Starting May 2nd (Diabetes Self-Management)*

*Gallia County - Starting June 4th (Diabetes Empowerment)*

*Jackson County - Starting May 2nd (Diabetes Self-Management)*

*Jackson County - Starting June 4th (Diabetes Empowerment)*

*Lawrence County - Starting June 6th (Diabetes Self-Management)*

*Ross County - Starting May 9th (Diabetes Self-Management)*

*Scioto County - Starting July 11th (Diabetes Self-Management)*

Call 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or 284, to learn more or to register.

Log on to [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org) to download our 2018 Wellness Calendar to learn more about wellness classes provided through the AAA7 to those age 60 and over at no cost.

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Manage Stress and Quit Smoking

When we are stressed, blood sugar levels go up. And when we're anxious, we may not manage diabetes well—forgetting to exercise, eat right, or take medicines.

Manage stress through deep breathing, yoga, tai chi, or hobbies that you enjoy and relax you. Smokers are 30–40 percent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than nonsmokers. And people with diabetes who smoke are more likely than non-smokers to have trouble with insulin dosing and controlling their disease. If you have diabetes and you smoke, you are more likely to have serious health problems from diabetes, including:

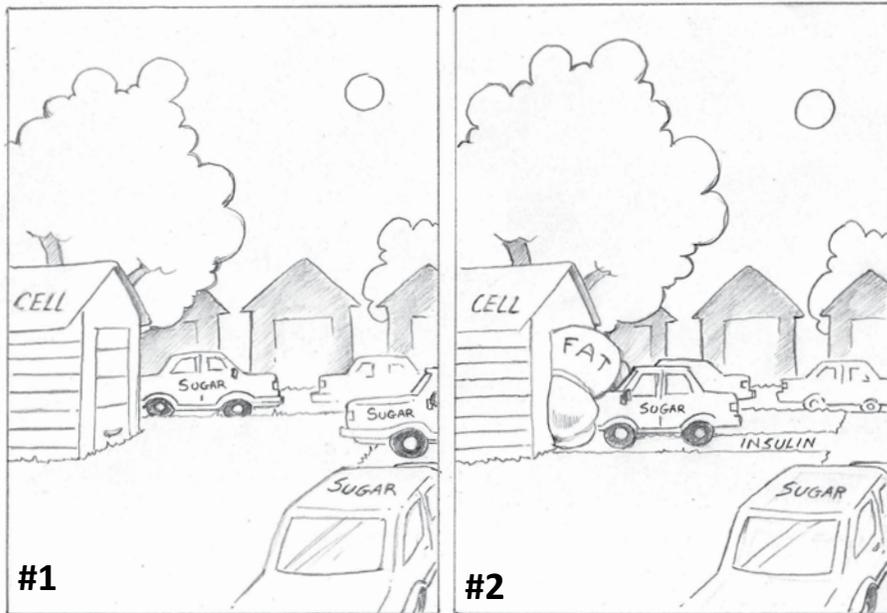
- Heart and kidney disease.
- Poor blood flow in the legs and feet that can lead to infections, ulcers, and possible amputation (removal of a body part by surgery, such as toes or feet).
- Retinopathy (an eye disease that can cause blindness).
- Peripheral neuropathy (damaged nerves to the arms and legs that causes numbness, pain, weakness, and poor coordination).

If you are a smoker with diabetes, quitting smoking will benefit your health right away.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



## Understanding Diabetes



Picture #1:

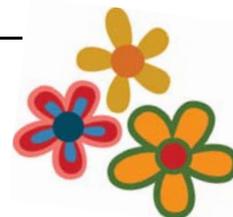
The pancreas doesn't produce insulin so there is no way for the sugar to get into the cells. (Type 1)

Picture #2:

Insulin is produced but can't get into the cells. (Type 2)

## Memory Care

A person with dementia should have yearly eye examinations. Poor vision can contribute to confusion. These exams can also spot or detect other serious diseases such as diabetes. Finding and treating eye disease early can prevent serious diseases from getting worse and leading to blindness.





**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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*Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*

## Safety Tips - Taking Care of Feet

People with diabetes may lose the feeling in their feet because the nerves are damaged. This is why the feet need to be checked every day. Without nerves to warn the brain of injury, the tissue can break down, leading to possibly severe infections and the need for amputation. Taking good care of the feet can reduce amputation rates by 45 to 85 percent. Things to look for include cuts, swelling, changes in color or shape, difference in feeling— such as being less sensitive or hurting more.

To protect feet, keep blood sugar at healthy levels. Exercise helps keep the blood flowing to the feet— a person with diabetes should put up their feet when sitting; wiggle their toes and move their ankles for five minutes, two or three times a day; and keep their legs uncrossed. Don't place feet into water without first checking the temperature with your hand.

For more information, visit the American Diabetes Association online at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

