

Diabetes News

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Contact Us

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday,

8:30 am–5:00 pm

TTY: 1-800-662-1220

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at **mvplistsens.com**.

All responses are 100% confidential and help create a better experience.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with diabetes. For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on guidelines for adult diabetes care developed by the American Diabetes Association: A Collaborative Guideline for the Management of the Adult Patient with Diabetes.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

Taking Care of Your Feet

When you have diabetes, your feet need extra care and attention. Diabetes can damage the nerve endings and blood vessels in your feet, making you less likely to notice when your feet are injured. Diabetes can also interfere with your body's ability to fight infection. If you develop a minor foot injury, it could become an ulcer or develop into a serious infection. Ulcers can be found on the bottom of your feet, or on the top or bottom of your toes. With good foot care, you can prevent most of these problems.

Caring for your feet is easy. Most of the care can be done when you are bathing and getting ready for bed. Preventing injury to your feet is merely a matter of wearing properly fitted shoes and socks at all times.

These steps can help keep your feet healthy:

- Examine your feet every day. And have your doctor examine your feet at each visit.
- Check your shoes for any loose objects or rough edges before you put them on.
- Look at foot care as part of your daily routine. Soon it will become as automatic as brushing your teeth.
- Don't use home remedies to treat foot problems. Home remedies can hurt your feet. Over-the-counter medicine designed to remove calluses could contain chemicals that could burn your skin. Also, trying to cut corns or calluses yourself could lead to infections.
- Get early treatment for any foot problem, even a minor one.



How do you care for your feet?

Here's how you can get started caring properly for your feet.

- Inspect your feet at least once a day. Look at all areas of your feet, including your toes. This is the most important part of your foot care. You can use a handheld mirror or magnifying mirror attached to the bathroom wall near the baseboard to inspect your feet. If you can't see well, have someone assist you.
- Wash your feet daily. Post the steps for foot-washing and nail care in your bathroom. Refer to the steps when you wash your feet so that they become a habit. Make sure you dry your feet and toes well before putting on shoes and socks.
- Wear shoes and socks that fit well. Soft shoes that have good support and that fit well (such as tennis shoes) are best for your feet. Break in new shoes slowly by wearing them for a few hours each day and increasing the number of hours you wear them each week. Wear socks that do not have seams.
- Protect your feet from injury. Before you put on your shoes, check for objects (such as pebbles) or rough spots inside your shoes or objects pushing through the soles. Inspect your feet for blisters, cuts, or scrapes after activities such as hiking or skiing. If you can't see well, have someone do this for you.
- Ask your doctor to check your feet during each visit. Your doctor may notice a foot problem you have missed. Take off your shoes and socks while you are waiting for your doctor. This will help remind your doctor to check your feet. Write down any minor problems or questions you may have about foot care and take this with you when you visit your doctor.
- Get early treatment for foot problems. Call your doctor even for minor foot problems, unless you have already learned from your doctor how to handle these problems. Your doctor may refer you to a podiatrist or orthopedic surgeon if special treatment is needed. A serious problem can develop from what seems like a minor irritation. If a foot problem develops, you need to seek care early.



Go online and take charge of your health.

The MVP Healthwise® Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*.



Are you due for important health screenings?

Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit mvphealthcare.com/PreventiveCare and talk to your doctor.

Quick Tips: Smart Snacking When You Have Diabetes

Follow your body's hunger and fullness signals. Smart snacking can help you keep your blood sugar levels stable, especially if you are taking medicine for diabetes.

Try these tips:

- Enjoy eating the right portion. Try using a smaller plate, bowl, or glass while you slowly eat your snack.
- Make healthy choices. Eat a piece of fresh fruit. Or combine that fruit with some protein, such as a small apple and a tablespoon of peanut butter. Or try dipping your fruit in some light yogurt.
- Be prepared. Keep cut-up raw vegetables in your refrigerator. You're more likely to grab them than something else. Try a low-fat dip on the side.
- Eat nuts. Try a small handful of almonds, walnuts, or pecans. These treats each have less than 15 grams of carbohydrate.
- Choose filling foods that can satisfy your hunger without a lot of calories. Try a hard-boiled egg or an ounce of reduced-fat cheese, such as string cheese.
- Skip high-fat dips. Instead, mix plain yogurt, fat-free mayonnaise, cottage cheese, or fat-free sour cream with a small amount of dry soup mix. Or try a bean dip made with fat-free refried beans, topped with salsa.
- Get more fiber. Put that turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread. Mix wheat germ into yogurt or sprinkle it on salads. Choose whole-grain breads and cereals.
- Try something new. Make a pita pizza with a piece of whole wheat pita bread, tomato sauce, and a sprinkling of reduced-fat cheese. Top with sliced zucchini or mushrooms. Bake until cheese is melted. Enjoy!



Manage Diabetes with These Important Tests

There are certain tests and exams that people living with diabetes should have done at least yearly, to avoid any complications. Take this list with you to your next doctor's visit to see if you are due for any of the following. Talk to your doctor about your results so you can understand what they mean to you.

Retinal Eye Exam

Get a retinal exam by an eye doctor every year because over time, diabetes can affect your eyes. Have this exam even if your medical doctor has examined your eyes, and even if your vision seems fine.

Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c)

Have this test every six to 12 months to show your average blood sugar level over the previous two to three months. A result of less than 8% can reduce your risk of complications such as kidney damage, blindness, nerve damage, and circulation problems.

Urine Protein

This test checks for early signs of kidney problems which can be treated and can help prevent future problems.

LDL Level

Sometimes called "bad" cholesterol, it contributes to the formation of plaque in the arteries, which can lead to a heart attack.

Complete Foot Exam

People living with diabetes are prone to poor circulation, nerve damage, foot ulcers, and infections, which can lead to serious foot problems. Also, always remember to take all medications as ordered by your doctor!

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Did you get your flu shot?

Visit your doctor or stop by your pharmacy to protect yourself and those around you.



Quick Tips for Your Next Appointment

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get answered.
- Bring an up to date “health history” list with you.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at **mvphealthcare.com**.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)