Diabetes: How a nutrition coach can help

If you have diabetes, the foods you dish up can go a long way toward helping you manage your disease. That’s because your food choices affect your blood sugar levels. Managing blood sugar can help you feel your best.

Learning new eating habits can take some practice. It helps to have someone to guide you — and cheer you on. That’s where nutrition coaching comes in.

**Food as treatment**

With nutrition coaching, a dietitian or nutritionist helps you make a healthy eating plan. Your dietitian might:

- Go over your eating habits with you
- Help you set nutrition goals
- Develop an eating plan just for you
- Teach you how to track what you eat and adjust your insulin dose if needed
- Give you tips for fitting healthy eating into your busy life

Want to learn more? Talk to your doctor to find out if nutrition coaching is right for you.

**Medicines matter too**

Healthy eating is a great tool to help manage your blood sugar. If your doctor prescribes medicines, they’re just as vital. Be sure to take them exactly as your doctor tells you to.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (www.eatright.org); American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org)
Diabetes: Get a leg up on foot care

People with diabetes are likely to have foot problems because the disease affects blood flow, nerves and the way wounds heal. Daily care can keep small problems from growing into big ones.

**Things to do every day:**
- Check feet for cuts, sores and other problems.
- Wash feet and dry them well — especially between toes.
- Use a pumice stone lightly on wet feet. This keeps calluses from building up.
- Use a thin coat of skin cream to keep feet soft. Don’t use it between toes.
- Always wear shoes and socks to protect feet from harm.

- Keep moving. Exercise and wiggle toes and feet to help keep blood circulating.
- Put feet up when sitting.

**Things to do as needed:**
- Keep toenails trimmed straight across. File any rough edges.
- Shop for shoes that fit well. Medicare covers special shoes, in some cases.
- If a foot sore develops, call or see a doctor quickly. Foot ulcers may infect bone and skin and lead to amputation.

Sources: American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

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It’s not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. The vaccine is safe and won’t cause the flu. If you haven’t had the flu shot yet, it’s not too late to get it. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

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Three questions to ask your doctor about opioids

Opioids can be dangerous when overused or abused. Before you take an opioid, ask your doctor:

1. Why do I need it?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there safer options?

Ask about Narcan too. It’s a medicine that could save your life if you overdose.

**Need help getting clean?** To find treatment near you, call 1-800-662-4357.

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (www.samhsa.gov); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov)

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Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to www.MercyCareAZ.org or call Member Services at 1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711) and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

Caregivers: Seek the help you deserve

If you are a caregiver, ask your loved one’s care manager about their needed services as well as services you might need as a caregiver. For example, you may feel overwhelmed, sad or burned out. The care manager can provide information and referrals for support.