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KYHEALTH CHOICES

Diabetes News

November is American Diabetes Month!

Diabetes is a serious disease that affects the body's ability to produce or respond properly to insulin, a hormone that allows blood glucose (sugar) to enter the cells of the body and be used for energy. Nearly 21 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes. It is the fifth deadliest disease in the U.S. and it has no cure.

Flu & Pneumonia Shots

Flu Shots

Having the flu can be dangerous for anyone. But it is extra risky for people with diabetes or other chronic health problems.

In general, every person with diabetes needs a flu shot each year. Talk with your healthcare provider about having a flu shot. Flu shots do not give 100% protection, but they do make it much harder for you to catch the flu for about 6 months. For extra safety, it's a good idea for the people you live with or spend a lot of time with to get a flu shot. You are less likely to get the flu if the people around you don't have it.

The best time to get your flu shot is September to November. The shot takes about two weeks to take effect. If you have a cold or other respiratory illness, wait until you are healthy again before having your flu shot. Avoid getting a flu shot if you are allergic to eggs.

Pneumonia Shots

People with diabetes are about 3 times more likely to die with flu and pneumonia. Yet only one-third of them ever get a simple, safe pneumonia shot. A pneumonia shot is recommended for anyone age 2 or older who, because of chronic health problems (such as diabetes) or age, has a greater chance of getting and dying with pneumonia.

You can get a pneumonia shot anytime during the year. For most people, one shot is enough protection for a lifetime. People under 65 who have a chronic illness or a weakened immune system should ask their doctor about getting another shot 5-10 years after their first one.

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Foot Care

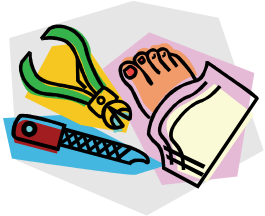
Inspect your feet every day and seek care early if you do get a foot injury. Make sure your healthcare provider checks your feet at least once a year—more often if you have foot problems. Your healthcare provider should also give you a list and explain the do's and don'ts of foot care. Most people can prevent any serious foot problem by following some simple steps. So begin taking care of your feet today.

Prevention

Your healthcare provider should perform a complete foot exam at least once a year—more often if you have foot problems.

Remember *to take off your socks and shoes while you wait for your physical examination.*

Call or see your healthcare provider if you have cuts or breaks in the skin or have an ingrown toe nail. Also, tell your healthcare provider if your foot changes color, shape or just feels different (for example, becomes less sensitive or hurts).



If you have corns or calluses, your healthcare provider can arrange for them to be trimmed for you. Your healthcare provider can also trim your toenails if you cannot do so safely.

Because people with diabetes are more likely to have foot problems, a foot care specialist may be on your healthcare team.

Caring for Your Feet

- **Take care of your diabetes.** Work with your healthcare team to keep your blood glucose in your target range.
- **Check your feet every day.** Look at your bare feet for red spots, cuts, swelling and blisters. If you cannot see the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror or ask someone for help.
- **Be more active.** Plan your physical activity program with your health team.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about Medicare coverage for special shoes.**
- **Wash your feet every day.** Dry them carefully, especially between the toes.
- **Keep your skin soft and smooth.** Rub a thin coat of skin lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes.
- **If you can see and reach your toenails, trim them when needed.** Trim your toenails straight across and file the edges with an emery board or nail file.
- **Wear shoes and socks at all times.** Never walk barefoot. Wear comfortable shoes that fit well and protect your feet. Check inside your shoes before wearing them. Make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects inside.
- **Protect your feet from hot and cold.** Wear shoes at the beach or on hot pavement. Don't put your feet into hot water. Test water before putting your feet in it just as you would before bathing a baby. Never use hot water bottles, heating pads or electric blankets. You can burn your feet without realizing it.
- **Keep the blood flowing to your feet.** Put your feet up when sitting. Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, two (2) or three (3) times a day. Don't cross your legs for long periods of time. Don't smoke.
- **Get started now.** Begin taking good care of your feet today. Set a time every day to check your feet.

How Stress Affects Diabetes

In people with diabetes, stress can alter blood glucose levels. It does this in two ways. First, people under stress may not take good care of themselves. They may drink more alcohol or exercise less. They may forget, or not have time, to check their glucose levels or plan good meals. Second, stress hormones may also alter blood glucose levels directly.

Studies have shown the physical and mental stress can affect glucose levels. The effects in people with type 1 diabetes are more mixed. While most people's glucose levels go up with mental stress, others' glucose levels can go down. In people with type 2 diabetes, mental stress often raises blood glucose levels.

Physical stress, such as illness or injury, causes higher blood glucose levels in people with either type of diabetes.

For some people with diabetes, controlling stress with relaxation therapy seems to help. It is more likely to help people with type 2 diabetes than people with type 1 diabetes. This difference makes sense. Stress blocks the body from releasing insulin in people with type 2 diabetes, so cutting stress may be more helpful for these people. People with type 1 diabetes don't make insulin, so stress reduction doesn't have this effect. Reducing stress can help people with type 1 diabetes take better care of themselves.

Some people with type 2 diabetes may also be more sensitive to some of the stress hormones. Relaxing can help by decreasing this sensitivity.

It's easy to find out whether mental stress affects your glucose control. Before checking your glucose levels, write down a number rating your mental stress level on a scale of 1 to 10. Then write down your glucose level next to it. After an week or two, look for a pattern. Drawing a graph may help you see trends better. Do high stress levels often occur with high glucose levels and low stress levels with low glucose levels? If so, stress may affect your glucose control.

Every 21 seconds someone is diagnosed with diabetes.

Learning to Relax

- **Breathing exercises.** Sit down and uncross your legs and arms. Take in a deep breath. Then push out as much air as you can. Breathe in and out again, this time relaxing your muscles on purpose while breathing out. Keep breathing and relaxing for 5 to 20 minutes at a time. Do the breathing exercises at least once a day.
- **Progressive relaxation therapy.** In this technique, which you can learn in a clinic or from an audio tape, you tense muscles, then relax them.
- **Exercise.** Another way to relax your body is by moving it through a wide range of motion. Three ways to loosen up through movement are circling, stretching, shaking parts of your body. To make this exercise more fun, move with music.
- **Replace bad thoughts with good ones.** Each time you notice a bad thought, purposefully think of something that makes you happy or proud. Or memorize a poem, prayer or quote and use it to replace a bad thought.
- Whatever method you choose to relax, practice it. Just as it takes weeks or months of practice to learn a new sport, it takes practice to learn relaxation.

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Candied Yams

Number of Servings: 9 Serving Size: $^1/_2$ cup

$^1/_4$ cup	firmly packed dark brown sugar	4	medium yams
1	Granny Smith apples, peeled and thinly sliced	1 tsp	cinnamon
		$^1/_2$ tsp	ground cloves
2 Tbsp	stick margarine, cut into pea-size pieces	$^3/_4$ cup	apple cider

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray an 8x8 inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place the yams on a baking sheet and bake until the skin feels soft to the touch, 60 minutes. Cool, peel and slice into $^1/_8$-$^1/_4$ inch rounds.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the sugar, cinnamon and cloves.
4. In the baking dish, place half of the yams, then the apple slices, then half of the sugar mixture. Top with the remaining yams and sugar mixture. Pour the cider around the edges of the baking dish. Evenly scatter the margarine pieces on top.
5. Bake covered, until bubbly and the yams are tender, about 40 minutes.

Amount per serving:

Calories	174	Calories from Fat	25	Total Fat	3g	Saturated Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg	Sodium	39mg	Total Carbohydrate	37g	Dietary Fiber	4g
Sugars	11g	Protein	1g				

This information is for educational purposes, it is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition.