

# Health Tips

from New London Hospital

## Good Diabetes Care Means More than Managing Glucose

**Keeping glucose levels** where they belong is important—but it's just the beginning of managing your diabetes.

**If you have diabetes**, you should schedule an eye exam once a year even if your sight seems fine. The doctor should dilate your pupils to see the back of the eye. Floss and brush your teeth and gums daily with a soft brush. Also, brush after each meal and snack. Keep false teeth clean, too. High blood glucose makes it easier for bacteria to grow, which in turn can lead to gum disease. If you smoke, talk with your doctor about getting help to quit.

**Diet and exercise** are the keys to a healthy cardiovascular system. Together, they can lower your blood glucose and blood pressure, keep your cholesterol in check, and help you lose pounds or maintain a healthy weight. Good nutrition means getting a balanced amount of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals each day. Physical activity is important, too. Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise over the course of a day, most days of the week.

**Your feet need special attention**, because diabetes can slow blood circulation to the lower part of the body. It also can damage nerves in the legs and feet. You should wash your feet in warm water every day, but don't soak them. Dry them well, especially between the toes. Report any foot problems to your doctor and have your feet checked at each visit.

**See a doctor at least twice a year** for a physical exam and important screenings. Get your blood pressure, weight, and feet checked, as well as your glucose levels with an A1C blood test. Once a year, get your cholesterol checked, and have urine and blood tests to show how your kidneys are functioning.

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