



# *Your Diabetes Care*

## **What You Need to Know and What You Should Expect from Your Health Care Provider**

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### **SUMMARY:**

Taking care of your diabetes is a daily task. While others may help and support you, finally, it is up to you. You will need to learn as much as possible about your diabetes and how to care for yourself. This will allow you to make the best choices for yourself each day. If you need more help, ask questions, get answers, or seek advice from a health care provider. Use all the tools you can, such as the *Diabetes Health Record*, to keep track of the basic tests you need and how often you need them. Taking care of your diabetes is a team effort – and you are the captain of your team.

### **YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

#### **About your diabetes . . .**

- What type of diabetes do you have?
- How does your body work differently now that you have diabetes?
- Is there a cure?
- How often should you see your health care provider about your diabetes?
- What are your treatment goals?

#### **About your medications . . .**

- What are the names and doses of medications you are taking for diabetes?
- When should you take your diabetes medications?
- What should you do if you miss or forget a dose?
- What are the side effects of your medications?
- How do these medications change blood glucose (sugar) levels in your body?
- What should you do if your blood glucose levels are out of range?
- What can you do to help your medications work better?

#### **About physical activity and your blood glucose levels . . .**

- How does physical activity change your blood glucose levels?
- What physical activities would help you take better care of your diabetes?
- Are there any activities that you should avoid?

#### **About the effects of food on your diabetes...**

- What types of food and how much should you eat?
- How do carbohydrates (sugars and starches), fat and salt affect your diabetes?
- How do you develop a meal plan that helps you take care of your diabetes?  
(Tip: work with a dietitian to develop a meal plan that you are able to follow.)

### **About monitoring your diabetes . . .**

- Why do you need to check blood glucose levels?
- How often should you check your blood glucose?
- Are you keeping a record of all your blood glucose levels? (Tip: make sure to bring all your records when you visit your health care provider.)
- How do you use your blood glucose tests to make changes to your diabetes plan?
- What other tests are needed to check your diabetes and how often do they need to be done? (Tip: see your *Diabetes Health Record* card.)

### **About other medications and medical problems . . .**

- Can other medical problems affect your diabetes? Can diabetes affect other medical problems?
- Can over-the-counter medications and/or herbal supplements be taken safely?
- What are the names and doses of other medications you are taking?  
(Tip: bring a list of your medical problems and the medications you are taking to every medical appointment and ask your health care provider if they can affect your blood glucose levels.)
- Do you have any other questions about your medication? If so, talk with your health care provider.

### **TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER(S):**

- Talk with your health care provider and let them know if your treatment plan is not working for you. Ask questions and get answers. Ask them to help you make a plan.
- If you do not understand the plan, ask more questions.
- Call members of your health care team if you need to clarify medication doses, report side effects, and discuss treatment of your diabetes or other medical problems.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Accept that you are responsible for your diabetes and overall health care treatment plan.
- Schedule and keep your medical appointments. If you must cancel, call to reschedule the appointment as soon as possible.
- Talk about your concerns, fears, and questions with your health care provider.
- Work with your health care provider to help you take care of your diabetes.
- Know and keep a record of the basic tests you need and how often you need them. The *Diabetes Health Record* will help you to record and remember the results of these tests in order to talk about them with your health care provider. (The *Diabetes Health Record* may be downloaded from the California Diabetes Program's Web site at [www.caldiabetes.org](http://www.caldiabetes.org). It is available in 14 languages.
- If you do not feel that you can work well with your health care provider it is "OK" to make a change.
- Get involved and stay involved in your health care. Your health is important to you!