

Will you let your diabetes control your life, energy level, future quality of life? Through your lifestyle habits, you can limit the damage that is done internally to your body by paying attention to your diabetes now on a daily basis.

Diabetes can do some dangerous damage to your organs, blood vessels and other areas of your body. The damage can occur subtly but in time can be devastating.

Watching a loved one over the years with diabetes develop problems and end up walking with a walker and being very weak, is very disturbing. Without blood sugars in optimal control, this damage will prevail.

Here are some things you can do to stay in control of your diabetes. You don't need to be perfect, just stay alert and make good decisions:

1. Check your blood sugars regularly. Show them to your health care provider.
2. Check in with your provider regularly, at least every 3 months
3. Communicate with your provider about any side effects from medications, financial issues getting medications and/or testing supplies.
4. A1C (3 month average blood sugar) should be 6.5% - 7%. If it is 8.0% or above, it is too high and the internal damage is progressing faster.
5. Eat sensibly remembering food is fuel, not pleasure. Eat protein at each meal or snack; eat regularly throughout the day; discontinue any sugary drinks; limit yourself to one small plate of food at a meal.
6. Be Active. You don't have to run a marathon, but move your body so the circulation remains healthy, and any extra sugar can be used up for energy. Walk inside the large stores if you cannot be outside.
7. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. The heat is here so stay hydrated. Drink an extra glass of fluid before meals.

Susan Smith, Ph.D., CDE, is a nationally Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) and a specialist in the field of diabetes since 1988. Since 2002 she has worked with patients individually through all of the internal medicine and family practice providers at Visalia Medical Clinic.

ssmith@vmchealth.com
Susan J. Smith, PhD, CDE
Certified Diabetes Educator
Visalia Medical Clinic

