

Diabetes Mellitus, Type 1, Follow-Up, Adult

Why do periodic exams?

In diabetes mellitus, the blood contains too much glucose. Glucose is a form of sugar. Insulin is a hormone normally produced by the body. It helps sugar move out of the blood into cells. There the sugar is used for energy. In diabetes, the cells do not get the sugar. Instead it stays in the blood. This happens because your body does not make insulin.

Over time, high levels of glucose in the blood sugar damage blood vessels and nerves. This can result in heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, problems with vision, and kidney failure. It can also cause changes in feeling and bloodflow in the hands or feet. Keeping your blood sugar levels within safe ranges gives you a better chance of preventing these problems. Our goal is to help you keep your blood sugar levels in the safe range as much as possible. We do regular exams so we can help you do this. We also do exams to look for any problems caused by your diabetes.

Diabetes is a lifelong condition. However, many resources are available to help and support you. We want to help you learn about your diabetes. The more you know, the better able you will be to keep your blood sugar levels in a safe range. Many problems can be avoided by following your diet, exercising, and taking your medicines as we tell you to. You may have trouble with your diet or weight. You may have problems with your medicines. You may have questions about exercise. We can help you with all of these issues.

What will be done during these exams?

We will do an exam to see how you are doing physically. We will check potential trouble spots, like your feet. The most important purpose of your visit is education. This is a time to ask questions about your health and how to best manage your diabetes. Each time you check your blood sugar, write down the date, time, and what your blood sugar level was. Also, write down when you take your medicine and how much you take. Record any changes in your diet or activity. Bring this record with you to every visit with us. You should also bring your

blood glucose monitor, as we may be able to download the readings directly from this. We will go over it with you and talk about any changes needed to keep your blood sugar levels in the safe range.

Periodically we will do tests to see how well your diabetes is controlled. We may also examine you and do tests to discover if more serious problems are developing. From time to time we may refer you to other specialists. For example, all persons with diabetes should have their eyes examined once a year. It's also important that you get regular dental care and take care of your teeth and gums. We recommend regular foot exams, especially for older adults. Exams are also important for younger people who have had diabetes for many years.

What to watch for?

There is danger if your blood sugar level becomes too high or too low. Both of these conditions can be life-threatening. Learn how to recognize the signs that they are happening so you can get medical help. Make sure your family knows the signs and what to do. Problems often occur when you are sick. Call us very time you get sick, even if the illness is minor. Call any time you vomit. Let us know if you have problems keeping your blood sugar level in a safe range. Let us know if you are not eating or drinking normally.

What advice may we have?

Never run out of your diabetes medicine. Avoid skipping doses. Bring insulin or other diabetes medicine with you on trips.

Avoid skipping meals and snacks.

Let us know whenever you see another health care provider for any reason. We want to work as a team with your other providers. This will help to make sure you get the best possible care. Talk to us before changing the amount of exercise you get. We may need to adjust your medicines.

We usually recommend an annual influenza shot.