

Why Diabetes Care Is More Important Than Ever

Preventing or managing diabetes has always been a top health priority. Now there's one more reason for taking diabetes seriously: COVID-19. If you catch the virus, having diabetes increases your risk of becoming severely ill.



Andrew Parziale, MD
Endocrinology

"In general, people with well-controlled diabetes tend to heal better than those with poorly controlled diabetes," says Andrew Parziale, MD, an endocrinologist at Summit Medical Group. "They are also less likely to develop diabetes-related health problems that may make it harder to recover from COVID-19."

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

Whether your goal is avoiding or controlling diabetes, a healthy lifestyle is always important.

- ▶ **Diet:** "Several types of diets can help with diabetes prevention," says Dr. Parziale. "They include low-fat, Mediterranean, vegetarian, and carb-controlled (moderately reduced-carb) diets."
- ▶ **Physical activity:** "Exercise is critical for insulin sensitivity, which is how well insulin works in your body," Dr. Parziale says. "A daily 20-minute walk after dinner is an easy way to start exercising. And it does great things for digestion, too."
- ▶ **Weight control:** In his endocrinology practice, Dr. Parziale has a special interest in weight management. (Thyroid disorders are another area of expertise.) "For patients who need to lose weight, dropping 10 to 15 pounds can have a dramatic impact on diabetes prevention," he says.

CONTROLLING DIABETES

If you already have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar can reduce your risk of developing serious complications, such as:

- ▶ Heart attacks
- ▶ Strokes
- ▶ Vision loss
- ▶ Nerve damage
- ▶ Kidney disease



Work closely with your doctor or an endocrinologist to manage your diabetes. Take your diabetes medicine or insulin as prescribed. And check your blood sugar regularly.

STAYING SAFE FROM COVID-19

Everyone should also take precautions against COVID-19. That means washing your hands often, wearing a mask in public, avoiding crowded places, and keeping at least six feet between yourself and others outside your household.

For people with diabetes, Dr. Parziale advises having enough supplies on hand for at least two weeks in case you need to shelter in place again. That includes diabetes medicine or insulin, testing supplies, and hypoglycemia treatments, such as glucose tablets or hard candies.

"We're in this for the long haul," says Dr. Parziale. "COVID-19 isn't going away anytime soon, so we need to remain diligent about these precautions."

TIME FOR TESTING?

Ask your provider whether you're due for testing to screen for diabetes or its complications.