

# Diabetes

Good blood sugar (glucose) control is important to the wound healing process. You and your doctor should work together to keep your diabetes under good control.

If it is not under control, the impact goes far beyond impaired wound healing.

Poorly controlled diabetes can cause damage to your skin, nerves, and arteries. This can lead to infection and even amputation. Here are a few areas of concern if you have diabetes:

## SKIN

Diabetics are more prone to certain skin conditions than others. Some skin problems to watch for include:

- Bacterial infections
- Fungal infections
- Itching
- Dryness and Peeling
- Callouses

Keep your skin moisturized every day. Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any changes in your skin.

## NERVES

High blood sugar levels can lead to diabetic neuropathy, or loss of feeling. Some warning signs of neuropathy include:

- Burning and tingling in your feet
- Problems with balance and coordination
- Sores on your feet

It is important to check your feet for skin problems everyday if you have diabetes. If you can't do this on your own, ask your caregiver to help.



## PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD)

Over time, elevated blood sugar levels can cause a buildup of plaque in your arteries. If given enough time, plaque can harden and narrow the arteries. When this happens, oxygen and nutrient rich blood cannot circulate throughout your body. Your doctor can test for PAD.

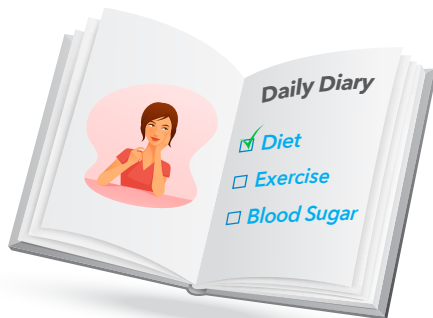
## IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your immune system helps heal by clearing away dead and damaged tissues. It also helps build new skin cells. When your blood sugars are high, the immune system does not work well. As a result, your wound healing is delayed or stopped.

## GOOD DIABETES MANAGEMENT

One of the best things you can do to manage your diabetes is to manage blood sugar levels. You should check your blood sugar levels throughout the day. Try to keep them as close to normal as possible. Use a meter to check your blood sugar levels while at home.

If you are having a difficult time keeping your blood sugar levels normal, keep a lifestyle diary. Track your diet, exercise and blood sugar levels each day.



There are also some lifestyle changes that are important to make when you have diabetes:

- Follow a diabetes meal plan to eat healthy foods that are low in fat and sodium and high in fiber.
- Exercise 30-60 minutes at least three days a week
- Maintain a healthy weight. If you need to lose weight, talk to your doctor about a weight loss plan.
- Learn healthy ways to handle stress
- Stop smoking

Good control of your diabetes will help prevent long term complications and help you heal your wound. Work closely with your doctor to monitor your blood sugar levels and adjust treatments as needed.



American Diabetes Association. (2013). Checking Your Blood Glucose. Retrieved on October 21, 2013 from <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/checking-your-blood-glucose.html>

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