

DIABETES OVERVIEW **(AND HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR NMPG PHYSICIAN)**

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus refers to a group of diseases result in your body having too high of a blood glucose (or “blood sugar”) level. This is due to your pancreas either not making enough insulin (“Type 1 Diabetes”) or your body not being sensitive enough to the insulin you make (“Type 2 Diabetes”).

What are the Symptoms of Diabetes?

Classic symptoms include being very thirsty and hungry (yet losing weight), urinating frequently, and fatigue. HOWEVER, many people have no symptoms at all for many years.

Why is it important to treat Diabetes?

If your glucose level is too high, you are more at risk for heart disease, strokes, infections, blindness, numbness and decreased blood circulation (resulting in amputation). Additionally, if your glucose is not broken down into usable energy – you will be more tired and get fatter more easily.

How do you treat Diabetes?

The most common treatment options include

- Lifestyle changes: eating healthier, eating less and moving more
- Oral medications: there are multiple types, the most common is called Metformin
- Insulin injections: if you are a Type 1 Diabetic, or a poorly controlled Type 2 Diabetic

How do you monitor Diabetes at home?

You can use a machine called a “glucometer” to check your glucose levels.

- Reasonable glucose levels are around 80-120 before eating, and up to 140 after eating
- Talk to your physician about how often YOU should check, and what ranges are normal for you.

How can you work with your NMPG physician to best manage your Diabetes?

First, you need to talk to your physician about how often to be seen. For most diabetics, you should be seen every 3-4 months. If you are very stable, your doctor might extend to every 4-6 months. There are several things your physicians will do at your visit:

- Review your home glucose readings with you (make sure to bring in at a summary of your readings).
- Check a blood test called the “Hemoglobin A1C” (or HbA1C) every 3-6 months. It provides a single value that summarizes how your glucose has been doing over the past 3-4 months. A value of under 7 is considered “good control”. A value of 7-8 is “fair control”, and a value over 8 is “poor control”.
- Check other blood and urine tests looking for any problems with your kidneys or liver.
- Your primary doctor, or a podiatrist, should do a foot exam every year to check for any lesions or signs of numbness. You should also be on the lookout for any sores or numbness.
- An eye specialist (Ophthalmologist) should do a full eye exam on you every year to look for any changes related to diabetes. If these are found early, they can treat them relatively easily. NOTE: Diabetes is the #1 cause of blindness in the US.

Other Diabetes Tips

- Wear or carry some form of medical identification. Get an NMPG Diabetes Wallet Card from your physician, or get a "Diabetes Alert Card" from the American Diabetes Association (800-DIABETES, www.Diabetes.org). Have the name and phone number of your doctor with you in case of an emergency.