Keeping an Eye on Diabetes

Diabetes is a serious disease, but fortunately there are ways to manage it. Taking care of yourself and your diabetes can prevent complications and help you feel better. With careful monitoring and regular visits to health care providers, you can keep your diabetes under control.

Monitoring
Blood glucose monitoring is an important tool for many people living with diabetes. These checks are performed with a blood glucose meter. The meter shows your blood glucose level at that moment.

When your blood glucose is at normal levels, you will likely have more energy, be less tired and thirsty, heal better, and need to urinate less frequently. You will also reduce your chance of health problems caused by diabetes, such as heart attack, stroke, eye problems, kidney problems, teeth and gum problems, pain, and tingling or numbness in your hands and feet.

Many factors can affect blood glucose levels, including food, physical activity, stress, illness and dehydration. Monitoring your levels can help you make decisions about eating and being active. If you have trouble reaching your blood glucose goals, talk to your health care team, as you may need to change your diabetes care plan.

Regular Doctor Visits
Good medical care is important when you have diabetes. In addition to your doctor, your diabetes care team may include nurses, an eye doctor and a dietitian. If you have any complications, your doctor may refer you to a specialist. Your health care team will create the best treatment plan for you.

How often you see your doctor depends on a number of factors, including if you take insulin, have trouble meeting your blood glucose goals, have any complications, or are starting a new medicine or insulin program. Your doctor will determine how often you should return for a visit.

Regular Eye Exams
People with diabetes have a higher risk of certain eye problems than people without it. The American Diabetes Association recommends that people with diabetes see their eye care professional — an optometrist or ophthalmologist — at least once a year for a dilated eye exam. These checkups are the best way to detect diabetic eye disease. You should also see your eye care professional if you have issues with your vision, such as blurry vision, seeing double, trouble reading signs or books, or if your eyes hurt.