

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH DIABETES

### 5 essential health checks to get this year

**G**et a head start on the new year by scheduling these appointments to help you manage your diabetes.

#### 1. Primary care visits

You'll want to get checkups with your care team every three to six months, says Chhaya Makhija, M.D. She's an endocrinologist and diabetes expert. These visits should include a full history, symptom review, blood sugar monitoring, blood test, foot exam, and discussion of preventive strategies, says Dr. Makhija.

Another time to check in with your PCP? After an emergency room or hospital visit. Follow up with

your PCP within seven days of going back home.

#### 2. Diabetic eye exam

Yearly eye exams can help your eye doctor detect early signs of diabetes-related vision problems.

#### 3. Foot exam

Diabetes can lead to numbness in your feet and infections. Experts recommend seeing a foot doctor, or podiatrist, at least once a year for a thorough foot exam.

#### 4. Blood work

These blood tests can

check your risk of diabetes complications:

- **Hemoglobin A1c**
- **Cholesterol**
- **Kidney tests**

"Other tests, like a complete blood count, thyroid hormone test, high sensitivity C-reactive protein, insulin level, and vitamin B12, can be useful on a case by case basis," says Dr. Makhija.

#### 5. Dental exam

Diabetes can increase your risk of gum disease. Experts say to see a dentist every six months for a cleaning and exam. Let your dentist know that you have diabetes.



## Ask the Diabetes Doctor

### Q Is my child at risk of other autoimmune diseases?

**A** Yes. Kathleen Bethin, M.D., a pediatric endocrinologist, says that children with type 1 diabetes may have a higher risk of developing another autoimmune disease in their lifetime. And a recent study found that about 1 in 5 adults with type 1 diabetes have at least one other autoimmune disease.

Autoimmune diseases develop when your body's immune system mistakenly attacks certain tissues or organs. There are more than 80 types of autoimmune diseases, and type 1 diabetes is one of them. As you probably know, it develops when the immune system damages cells in the pancreas that make insulin.

Among kids with type 1 diabetes, thyroid disease (hypo- or hyperthyroidism) is the most common, says Dr. Bethin. That's why she screens her patients' thyroid hormone levels yearly.

Celiac disease, which affects the digestive system, and Addison's disease, which affects the adrenal glands, are also more common in people with type 1 diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that people with type 1 diabetes get screened for thyroid disease and celiac disease, especially if they're experiencing symptoms.

It's a good idea to talk to your child's doctor about his or her risk of these diseases, the specific symptoms to watch for, and how often he or she should be screened.



### Case Manager Spotlight

**Latricia Campbell** has been a Disease Management Case Manager with AvMed for two years.

"I enjoy being a Case Manager because I am able to assist our Members and make a difference in their wellbeing."



**To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735.**



## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

### Save time and money with these go-to healthy foods



**C**onvenience foods often get a bad rap. You may think they're less healthy. Or they come with a higher price tag. But there are lots of packaged foods that hit the sweet spot: They're nutritious, low-cost, and easy. Here are some of my favorites:

**Greek yogurt:** Protein is often the most expensive part of your diet. But Greek yogurt is a great low-cost option that provides about 12 to 15 grams of protein

per serving. Individual cups are convenient for a grab-and-go breakfast.

**Peanut butter:** Another low-cost protein, peanut butter is also packed with good-for-you fats that will keep you full and satisfied. Other nut butters, like almond and cashew, are trendy, but they aren't any healthier. Save money by sticking with old-fashioned peanut butter.

**Bananas:** Whole fruits, like bananas, aren't technically

packaged foods, but they're just as convenient! And at about 25 cents apiece, you can't beat the price. Keep them on hand for breakfast, snacks, or an easy addition to a meal.

#### **Precooked grains:**

Whole grains are better for your health, but they take a long time to cook. Plain, precooked grains, like brown rice and quinoa, are a great shortcut without sacrificing nutrition.

Remember, when shopping for packaged foods, always check nutrition labels and compare prices. Watch out for sodium and added sugars, which can be higher in packaged foods. And you don't have to be brand loyal — choose whichever product has the lowest price with similar nutrients and ingredients.

#### **Unencrypted email makes it easier to communicate with your case manager!**

To opt in, scan the QR code with your phone. Log in or register to the member portal and select "Set My Preferences."



## Recipe



## Salsa rice and beans

Serves 6 | Prep time: 40 minutes

This is a great recipe to have on hand for busy weekdays. Leftovers are also delicious topped with a fried egg.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup brown rice
  - 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup jarred salsa
  - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups vegetable broth
- Optional for garnish: finely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

### Instructions:

1. Combine rice, beans, salsa, and broth in a 3- to 4-quart saucepan; bring mixture to a boil.
2. Cover, reduce heat to low, and gently simmer until rice is cooked through, about 40 minutes. Remove lid and fluff with a fork. Serve with extra salsa and chopped herbs, if desired.

### Nutrition facts

Calories 175 | Fat 1g (Sat Fat 0g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 35mg | Carbs 35g | Fiber 4g | Sugar 2g (inc. 0g Added Sugar) | Protein 6g | Vit D 0 $\mu$ g | Calcium 35mg | Iron 1mg | Potassium 295mg