

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH DIABETES

What to know about diabetes and blood pressure

Diabetes and high blood pressure often go hand in hand. About two-thirds of people with diabetes also have high blood pressure.

High blood pressure and high blood sugar both cause damage to your blood vessels that can increase your risk of heart disease. High blood pressure can also raise your risk of kidney disease and diabetic eye disease.

High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so checking your blood pressure regularly is important. Your doctor should check your blood pressure every time you

see him/her (at least once a year). If you'd like to check it more often, talk to your doctor about how you can monitor your blood pressure at home.

If you have high blood pressure, your doctor will likely prescribe medicine to help lower it. Lifestyle changes like these can also help:

- **Eat less sodium (salt).** Cutting back on packaged, processed foods is key.
- **Eat more potassium.** Vegetables and fruits are healthy sources.
- **Manage stress.**

Get these health checks regularly to prevent diabetes complications:

A1c: Assesses your average blood sugar over the past few months

Urine protein: Screens for early signs of kidney damage

Dilated eye exam: Screens for diabetic eye diseases

Blood pressure: Monitors risk of hypertension

- Exercise regularly.
- Limit alcohol and quit smoking.

The great news: Many of these changes can help you manage your diabetes too.



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Ask the Diabetes Doctor

Q How can I help my teen manage diabetes on his or her own?

A As your kid becomes a teen, it's time to get him/her more involved in diabetes care. "Unless you plan to move into your child's dorm, he/she needs to learn to manage his/her diabetes," says Kathleen Bethin, M.D., an endocrinologist and spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Start when your child is young with these tasks and build from there:

Calculating insulin dose.

"These days, the pumps do the calculations for you," says Dr. Bethin. "But since kids are learning arithmetic, let your child calculate the dose, then check against the pump."



Planning their insulin needs around their day. "When your child is checking his or her blood glucose levels, challenge him or her to figure out what to do when being active," says Dr. Bethin. Calculating how much insulin is needed for different activities is another important math exercise.

Changing pump sites. "Some insulin pump sites

are more challenging than others, so start out with sites on the stomach or legs. After some practice, your child can try sites on the back," says Dr. Bethin.

Keeping track of supplies. Have your child check how much insulin is left, and talk about how to place reorders. "Don't let him or her think that the supplies just keep magically refilling on their own," says Dr. Bethin.

Care Advocate Spotlight

Laura Lippert has been with AvMed for 16 years, and a Care Advocate for the last 10 years.

"My favorite thing about being a Care Advocate is the members I am privileged to speak to and assist — and knowing that possibly I might have made someone's life a bit brighter or easier, or perhaps lessened their burden a little."



Healthy Eating Made Simple

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

What's so great about the Mediterranean diet?



You've no doubt heard of the Mediterranean diet. It's been named the best diet by *U.S. News & World Report* for the past several years. And tons of research back up its health benefits, which include better heart health, less inflammation, weight loss, cancer prevention, and more.

The Mediterranean diet is more of a lifestyle change than a strict "diet" with specific rules to follow. But you don't have to live on

the Mediterranean coast to reap the benefits of this eating style. Adding some of its key principles to your day can help. Here's how:

Add more fruits and vegetables

Plant foods are the base of the Mediterranean diet. The fiber and nutrients from these foods are great for your health. Try to add vegetables to every meal. Swap dessert for fresh fruit. And experiment with meatless meals based on beans and grains instead.

Eat fish and seafood at least twice a week

Seafood has omega-3 fats and minerals that benefit heart and brain health. Instead of chicken or beef, serve fish like tuna, salmon, trout, and sardines.

Use healthy fats from plant foods

Unsaturated fats from plant foods are better for your health than saturated fats from animal foods. Swap butter for oils like olive or canola in your cooking.

Enjoy meals with loved ones

The Mediterranean diet isn't just about the food. Being active and socializing are part of the Mediterranean lifestyle too. Eat meals with family and friends, then take a stroll together after dinner.

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Mediterranean Bean Salad

Recipe



Serves 6
Prep time:
15 minutes

Ingredients

¼ cup olive oil	1 small red onion, minced
2 tbsp red wine vinegar	1 medium cucumber, chopped
1 lemon, juiced	1 cup chopped fresh herbs like mint, parsley, and/or dill
2 tsp garlic powder	½ cup crumbled feta cheese
2 cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained	
1 pint grape tomatoes, halved	

Directions

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and garlic powder. Add the rest of the ingredients to the bowl and toss to combine.

Nutrition facts (per serving):

Calories 300; Fat 14g (Sat Fat 4g); Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 360mg; Carbs 26g; Fiber 7g; Sugar 6g (including 0g Added Sugar); Protein 9g; Vit D 2µg; Calcium 130mg; Iron 2mg; Potassium 340mg