

# managing **DIABETES**<sup>TM</sup>

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## Heart Disease Risk Increases for People with Diabetes

When you have diabetes, paying attention to your heart health is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

Diabetes puts you at greater risk for heart disease. In fact, diabetes is one of the most common reasons people get heart disease. It's also one of the most serious complications that people with diabetes face. You're more likely to have heart attacks at an early age, and accordingly, the majority of deaths connected to diabetes are related to heart disease.

Unfortunately, more than two-thirds of people with diabetes are unaware of the risks and don't think of heart disease as a serious problem. That's a big mistake!

The statistics may seem scary, but when you take heart disease seriously, there is a lot you can do to help reduce the risks. Awareness is the first step. Read inside for more tips on preventing heart disease.



## SEASONAL FLU VERSUS NOVEL H1N1: HOW TO STAY WELL

Influenza, commonly called “the flu,” is caused by a virus that infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). Viruses can be extra dangerous for people with diabetes.

For more information about the seasonal or H1N1 flu, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu). Many vaccines are covered benefits with no deductible on most SelectHealth plans. Call Member Services to confirm your benefits.

### SEASONAL FLU VS. H1N1

So what is the difference between seasonal influenza and the new flu virus known as novel H1N1 influenza or “swine flu?” Seasonal flu is the regular yearly influenza caused by two main types of flu virus: A and B. Novel H1N1, or “swine flu” is a new strain of influenza A virus that was first detected in March 2009. Since H1N1 flu is a new strain, most people don’t have a resistance to it. This means that illness from this virus may spread more quickly.

Symptoms of the seasonal flu and novel H1N1 are similar. They occur suddenly and can cause aches, chills, cough, fever, headache, or a sore throat. Some individuals with H1N1 experience diarrhea or vomiting. Most healthy people recover from the flu without complications. But if you have a high-risk condition like diabetes, it is important to consult your doctor early for the best treatment. People with diabetes who get the flu are three times more likely to die from it than someone who doesn’t have diabetes. They are also five times more likely to be hospitalized.

### HOW CAN I STAY WELL OR AVOID SPREADING THE FLU?

Both the seasonal influenza and the novel H1N1 are spread through exposure—mostly through coughs and sneezes or touching surfaces that have been touched by a person sick with the virus. You can avoid getting the flu or spreading it by following these CDC recommendations:

- > Get a flu shot.
- > Avoid close contact with others.
- > Stay home when you are sick.
- > Wash your hands often.
- > Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.
- > Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

One of the most effective ways to prevent influenza is by getting a flu shot. Virus strains change constantly, which is why yearly vaccines are important. Studies show that people who are at high risk for the flu are much less likely to be hospitalized or die during the flu season when they get a vaccination.

The seasonal vaccine is very effective, but it is still possible to contract the flu. Those who get the seasonal flu after vaccination usually have a milder case. The seasonal influenza vaccine will not protect you from novel H1N1 virus.

A vaccine has been developed against H1N1. Federal and local health officials have been asked to administer it to children and young adults ages six months to 24 years, pregnant women, individuals younger than 64 with chronic diseases, caretakers and home contacts of infants (younger than six months), and healthcare workers.

For more information about seasonal or H1N1 flu, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu). Many vaccines are covered benefits with no deductible on most SelectHealth plans. Call Member Services at 801-442-5038 (Salt Lake area) or 800-538-5038 to confirm your benefits. SelectHealth will provide coverage for the administrative costs of the H1N1 vaccine. We will waive copays, coinsurance, and deductible amounts for all medical plan members who qualify for the vaccine. (The federal government will pay for the vaccine itself.)

#### References:

*Tamara Lewis, M.D., M.P.A., M.P.H., Intermountain Healthcare and Shannon Spencer RN, BSN, SelectHealth.*

*“What You Can Do.” Health Education Answers CD-ROM, version 1.0, Eli Lilly and Company, 2009; Used with permission.*



## WHY DO PEOPLE WITH DIABETES GET HEART DISEASE?

People with diabetes are at a much higher risk for heart disease, and it has a lot to do with the fact that they often have risk factors for heart disease.

These include the following:

- > Low levels of High-Density Lipoprotein or (HDL) cholesterol, known as the “good” cholesterol
- > High levels of triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood
- > High levels of Low-Density Lipoprotein or (LDL), known as the “bad” cholesterol for its damaging effects on blood vessels
- > High blood pressure levels
- > Unhealthy weight or obesity
- > Little to no exercise



### CHOLESTEROL IS A BALANCING ACT

The fact that diabetes can throw both good and bad cholesterol out of balance is the main reason for the increased risk of heart disease. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that is normal in your body. When cholesterol levels are too high, excess can build up on the inside of your arteries creating lumps

or plaques. For good blood flow, your arteries should be free of plaques. When you hear someone talk about “hardening” of the arteries, this is what they mean. Doctors call it atherosclerosis. Fortunately, HDL drags away some of the extra cholesterol that LDL leaves. This is why it’s best to have high HDL levels and low LDL levels.

People with diabetes tend to have LDL that sticks to the inside of the arteries more easily, which damages the blood vessel walls. Additionally, the sugar in the blood sticks to the LDL. This sugary coating causes the LDL to stay in the bloodstream longer, which increases the chance it will form a plaque. People with diabetes often have lower HDL levels and higher triglycerides. Diabetes then throw off the balance between good and bad cholesterol.

Luckily, this can be prevented. Be sure to work with your doctor during routine visits to discuss ways you can lower your LDL and raise your HDL.

**Also, read “Five Things You Can Do to Prevent or Control Heart Disease” on page 7 for more tips on beating the risks.**

*Reference: Diabetes Complications.” Health Education Answers CD-ROM, 1.0, Eli Lilly and Company, 2009; Used with permission.*



## how to deal safely with infections

There are two main causes for infections—bacteria and viruses.

Bacterial infections are often treated with antibiotics. Viral infections—which lead to the common cold and most coughs and sore throats—are not.

Still, many people get confused. Unfortunately, you can only recover from a viral infection by waiting until it has run its course.

Taking an antibiotic for a viral infection is useless—and it can cause antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics are powerful medications. Weak bacteria are killed each time you take an antibiotic. But the strong ones can survive and continue to grow and multiply. These are known as antibiotic-resistant bacteria. That means the antibiotics may not work as well when you really need them.

Your doctor can tell you when it’s right to take an antibiotic. Viral infections can actually lead to bacterial infections, which may require an antibiotic.

*Reference: “Medication Safety.” Health Education Answers CD-ROM, version 1.0, Eli Lilly and Company, 2009; Used with permission.*



You've had those days. You feel poorly or a situation develops that can make diabetes more difficult to control.

# dealing Sick with Days

Viral upper respiratory or stomach illnesses are common causes of “sick days.” So are stress, flu, pneumonia, urinary infections, and others. We've outlined some tips for getting through those sick days a little easier.



## THINK AHEAD

Stock a sick-day cupboard if you don't already have one. This may be a drawer or a cabinet set aside to hold supplies for sick days—things like sugar-free and sugar-containing fluids, snacks, a glucagon kit (if one has been prescribed for you), and medications for fever control. Keep a copy of sick-day contacts, including phone numbers for your doctor, nurse, diabetes educator, and family or friends.

Make sure your diabetes medication is fresh and in good supply, including insulin if you use it. Also make sure your blood glucose/blood ketone meter is working properly. Check the time and date on the monitor to make sure it's correct. Have plenty of blood glucose strips, blood ketone strips, and batteries on hand for your meter, and make sure they have not expired.

Use a calibration strip to calibrate your meter prior to using a new box of strips. If you're not sure how to do this, read the instructions that came with your meter. You might need to call your meter manufacturer's customer service help line for further explanation.

## DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS, IF POSSIBLE

It's important to drink plenty of fluids on days you are sick. If you can't because of nausea and vomiting, you should call your doctor. Otherwise, here are some things to keep in mind:

- > Weigh yourself initially, and then at least once daily to see if you have lost weight due to dehydration.
- > Drink small quantities of fluid frequently rather than lots of fluid at once.
- > If you have had diarrhea or are just getting over a bout of vomiting, try to drink fluids containing salts and potassium such as sports drinks, broth, or bouillon.
- > If you have a fever, take the medication and dosage your doctor recommends to bring it down. Fever can make the dehydration worse. If you are vomiting, talk to your doctor about using suppositories for fever and nausea.
- > If you lose weight, or your eyes become sunken in appearance, or your tongue is excessively dry, call your doctor. These can be signs of dehydration.
- > Avoid caffeine. It's dehydrating.
- > Remember that an elevated blood glucose level can cause you to urinate frequently. For this reason, frequent urination may not necessarily mean you are well hydrated when your glucose is elevated.

## EAT NORMALLY, IF POSSIBLE

Maintaining proper nutrition and a normal diet on sick days helps you get better and keeps your diabetes in control. If you cannot eat at all or if you vomit more than one time, check your blood glucose and blood ketone every 1-2 hours and call your doctor. You might also try small portions of easy-to-eat foods like pudding, gelatin, applesauce, soup, or toast. If your blood glucose is running low (<70 mg/dL), try small amounts of candies or sweets like jelly beans, sherbet, a sugar-containing frozen Popsicle®, or dried fruit.

*Reference: "What to Do on Sick Days". Data on file at Abbott Diabetes Care. ART16804 Rev. A. 2009. p 4-14.*



# Holiday Nog

servings

4

serving size

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup

Not so long ago, eggnog was made by blending raw eggs and cream together to make a very rich, thick beverage. Rum and nutmeg were often added to the adult drink.

Today, food safety experts discourage drinking or consuming raw eggs at any time. (Purchased eggnog contains pasteurized eggs to eliminate any safety concerns.)

This recipe uses soy drink and bananas, creating a delightful taste while dramatically boosting the nutrition. Soy drink is a lactose-free, milk-like product that has been fortified with calcium and other nutrients to make it fairly comparable to cow's milk. It smells and looks slightly different than cow's milk, so don't be surprised when you first open it! After opening, you need to use it within seven to ten days.

## ingredients

- 1 cup plain soy drink
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 medium banana
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 8 ice cubes
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground allspice

## directions

In a blender, combine the soy drink, juice, banana, vanilla, and ice cubes until smooth. Pour into glasses and sprinkle with allspice.



## Nutrition Information (per serving)

Calories	78
Calories from Fat	5
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	23 mg
Potassium	n/a
Carbohydrates	17 g
Dietary Fiber	1 g
Sugar	13 g
Protein	2 g
Dietary Exchange	1 carbohydrate

Reference: American Diabetes Association, My Food Advisor™

BETTER HEALTH

## sick day snacks

When you're sick, you may not have much of an appetite or feel like you can tolerate your usual foods. Try some of the foods and liquids listed below. Each has about 15 grams of carbohydrates and might just hit the spot when you're under the weather:

- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup regular Sprite®
- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup regular JELL-O®
- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit juice
- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ice cream
- >  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sherbet
- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup creamed soup
- >  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup instant breakfast drink

Reference: Intermountain Healthcare. 2005-2008. p 90.

## sick days: when to call your doctor

Call for advice or an appointment in the following circumstances:

- > You've been sick or had a fever for a few days and aren't getting better.
- > You've had vomiting or diarrhea for more than six hours.
- > You have a fever higher than 101.5F or a fever that lasts for more than 24 hours.
- > You have a fasting blood glucose level of 240 or higher for more than 24 hours.
- > You have moderate to large amounts of ketones in your urine. Get emergency care if you can't reach your doctor.
- > You begin to notice problems like confusion or dehydration.
- > You aren't sure what to do to take care of yourself.

Reference: "Living Well: A Diabetes Care Handbook." Intermountain Healthcare. 2005-2008. p 90.





Meet

SelectHealth Member

**KIRK RASBAND**

*Kirk Rasband reduced his A1C from 10.3 to 5.9. Not only have his lifestyle changes affected his A1C levels, but he is sleeping better and enjoys an overall improved mood.*

**HOW HE DID IT**

Kirk started by learning about food choices, exercise, and the effects of insulin. Carbohydrate counting was tough at first. He would only eat items where the “carbs” were stated right on the nutrition labels.

Since then, he has educated himself enough to estimate the number of carbs and determine which food combinations help keep his blood sugar at a good level. For instance, he learned it is important to eat both a carb and a protein at the same time. Kirk said, “When you have diabetes, you never stop learning. Patience is important. I’ve stumbled and failed on occasion, but I’ve learned not to let these times get me down. Instead, I pick myself up and start over.”

Kirk also walks briskly—usually 30 minutes around his office campus—every day. He has learned to listen to his body, knowing what he needs to do to feel his best.



**WATER AEROBICS:**

a different way to exercise

Did you know you can strength train, stretch, and do cardiovascular exercises in water? Joining a water aerobics class is a great way to get a complete workout. It’s safe and effective for all conditions and ability levels and can produce some serious body benefits! Water aerobics can help improve heart health; increase stamina, strength, and flexibility; and it’s easy on joints, ligaments, and bones. Workouts in the water may also help minimize symptoms of depression and anxiety, reduce body fat, and lower your risk for many diseases.

**WHY ARE WATER EXERCISES SO GOOD FOR YOU?**

The buoyancy of water reduces your weight by roughly 90 percent. This means less stress is placed on joints, muscles, and bones, which reduces the risk of injury or muscle soreness. Strength training benefits occur when water resistance acts as “weight” in opposition to your movements, and builds stronger muscles. Devices like handheld paddles or foam dumbbells can be added for intensity. Stretching is also less difficult in the water because of the decreased gravity, allowing you to move your joints through a wider range of motion.

**WHERE CAN I FIND A WATER AEROBICS CLASS?**

Check with your local recreation center, gym, or public swimming pools to see if they offer classes. A good class should consist of a warm-up followed by a cardiovascular and strength training routine, which gradually increases in intensity and ends with a solid cooldown. Classes should also include a variety of stretching/flexibility exercises for your entire body.

*References:*

*“Make a Splash with Water Fitness”. American Council on Exercise®. 16 Sept. 09 <[http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts\\_display.aspx?itemid=2548](http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts_display.aspx?itemid=2548)>.*

*Marian Paller, M.S., a certified wellness coach and personal trainer with SelectHealth.*



# Health Plans Working Together to Improve Diabetes Education

The Utah Health Plan Partnership is a cooperative effort between the Utah Department of Health and several health insurance plans, including SelectHealth. The Partnership creates and distributes diabetes education tools for people with diabetes and their providers.

*Call for a free magnet: a product of the Utah Health Plan Partnership*

The Partnership collaborated to design a refrigerator magnet to help you keep track of the “ABCs of Diabetes.” Call SelectHealth Quality Improvement at 801-442-7428 (Salt Lake area) or 800-374-4949, option 3 to get yours. You can also e-mail [karen.spencer@selecthealth.org](mailto:karen.spencer@selecthealth.org).

	What It Is	When to Test	Recommended Target*	Last Result
<b>A</b> A1C	Average blood glucose over the past 3 months	Every 3 to 6 months*	Less than 7%	
<b>B</b> Blood Pressure	The force of blood against blood vessels	Every visit to your doctor	Less than 130/80	
<b>C</b> Cholesterol	LDL (bad) HDL (good)	Once a year (Fasting Blood Test)	Less than 100 Men: More than 40 Women: More than 50	

Utah Health Plan Partnership  
www.health.utah.gov/diabetes \*Talk to your doctor about setting your target.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor	
1. What are my blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers?	
2. What do these numbers mean? What should my numbers be?	
3. What can I do to get my numbers where they should be?	
4. How much physical activity should I do each day?	
5. What kind of meal plan should I follow?	
6. How often should I check my blood glucose?	
7. How often should I visit the eye doctor and dentist?	
8. How do I check my feet?	
9. Can I take my diabetes medication with other medicines?	

  

More Diabetes Tests	
• Kidney screening at least once a year (urine and blood)	
• Complete foot exam once a year	
• Dilated eye exam once a year (diabetes eye exam)	
• Dental checkup every six months	
• Flu shot once a year and pneumonia shot as recommended	
• Diabetes self-management education as needed	

Access materials from the Utah Health Plan Partnership and learn more about its efforts at [www.health.utah.gov/diabetes/healthplanpartnership](http://www.health.utah.gov/diabetes/healthplanpartnership). The site offers free diabetes education tools in Spanish and English, guidelines for school personnel, diabetes-related news, and more.

## November is American Diabetes Month®

# Five Things You Can Do to Prevent or Control Heart Disease

1. Have your LDL cholesterol checked at least once each year
2. Be physically active
3. If you smoke, find a way to stop
4. Manage your blood sugar and blood pressure (with the help of your doctor)
5. Manage your blood cholesterol levels with your doctor's help. Your LDL should be no higher than 100. Researchers have proven that lowering LDL can help prevent a heart attack. Eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet, lower your calorie intake, and lose weight to help improve your levels



*Don't forget your yearly LDL cholesterol checkup*

Reference: "Diabetes Complications." Health Education Answers CD-ROM, version 1.0, Eli Lilly and Company, 2009; Used with permission.

# SAVE YOUR VISION WITH EYE EXAMS

The American Diabetes Association recommends that most people with diabetes have a comprehensive eye exam *every* year. Your doctor will let you know if your eyes need to be checked more often. You will likely need to visit a specialist called an ophthalmologist to perform the exam. If you notice eye pain or changes in your vision, be sure to see your eye doctor right away. Many issues are preventable, but if they are ignored they can lead to further problems, including loss of sight. Don't take that chance!

Visit [www.selecthealth.org/discounts](http://www.selecthealth.org/discounts) to access deals on eyewear available for SelectHealth members.

Reference: See Fit brochure; Eli Lilly and Company, 2008; Used with Permission.



# Sign Up to Receive Paperless Claims!

To learn how to sign up, visit [whathaveyoudone.org](http://whathaveyoudone.org) and follow the instructions.



Plus, find out how you can stop junk mail from coming to your home and find places in your community where you can recycle.

[whathaveyoudone.org](http://whathaveyoudone.org)

We love green at SelectHealth! In an effort to save trees and get information to you quicker, we encourage you to go paperless by signing up to receive only electronic claims. You'll get an e-mail notification when a new claim is available to view.



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