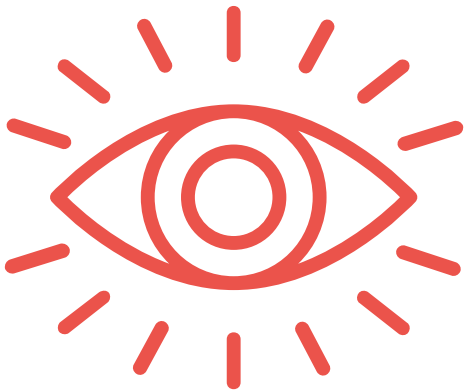


Preventative Care for Chronic Complications

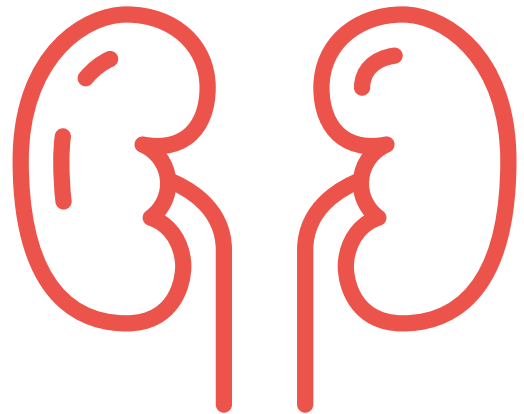


Diabetes & Preventative Care

Preventative care is crucial for managing chronic diabetes complications and improving overall health outcomes. By taking proactive measures such as attending regular check-ups, monitoring blood sugar levels, and adopting a healthy lifestyle, you can potentially prevent or delay the onset of complications associated with diabetes. Early detection and management of these complications can significantly reduce the burden of the disease and enhance quality of life.



Eye Care



Kidney Care



Dental Care



Foot Care

Diabetes and Eye Care

Did you know that diabetes can affect your eye health? When blood sugar levels are too high, it can damage blood vessels throughout the body, including your eyes. This can cause different eye diseases, some of which can lead to blindness if not caught early on. You may not experience symptoms in the early stages of eye disease, so it is important to get regular eye exams.



Diabetic Retinopathy

One eye disease that is caused by diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. If you have diabetic retinopathy, the blood vessels in your retina (the part of your eye that senses light), are damaged. This causes blood vessels to leak blood or fluid into the retina, leading to tissue damage. As diabetes progresses, this can lead to a buildup of scar tissue that causes the retina to detach from the back of the eye.

Other Eye Diseases

Diabetic retinopathy is not the only eye disease that can be caused by diabetes. People with diabetes are also at a higher risk of developing cataracts and glaucoma. Both of these eye diseases can cause loss of vision if not treated.

A dilated eye exam can determine whether or not you have these eye diseases.

Call your doctor if you notice any changes in your vision, including these symptoms:

- Blurred vision
- Floating spots
- Flashes
- Blind spots
- Distortion
- Vision loss

Get Your Eyes Checked!

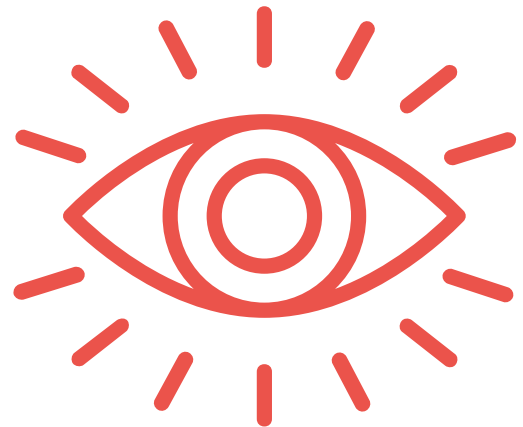
You may not notice eye damage until it is too late, but your doctor can catch it early on by doing a comprehensive eye exam. Eye exams are the only way to detect these issues.

An eye exam is done by an ophthalmologist or optometrist; both are different types of eye doctor. During this exam, your doctor will check your vision using a chart with letters and numbers in different sizes. They will also conduct a dilated eye exam. The doctor will give you eye drops that will dilate (or widen) the pupils in your eyes and will look at your eyes using a specific magnifying glass and a bright light.

The doctor may also take pictures of your eyes using a special camera to get a better look. This is known as a digital retina scan.

Please note: If you get your eyes dilated, your vision will be blurred for about 6 hours. You should have someone drive you home.

You should get a comprehensive eye exam at least once per year. If you have eye problems, you may need to see your eye doctor more often.



Other Ways to Prevent Eye Disease

- Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses or a hat.
- Quit smoking.
- Wear protective eye gear when doing certain activities, like handling power tools.
- Eat a nutrient-dense diet and exercise regularly.

Diabetes and Foot Care

Did you know that diabetes can cause nerve damage or poor blood circulation in your feet? This can lead to serious issues such as infections, sores, and even amputation of a toe, foot, or part of the leg. As a person with diabetes, it is important to take certain measures to keep your feet healthy.

Diabetic Neuropathy

Diabetic neuropathy (or nerve damage) can occur when your blood sugar levels are high. The high levels of sugar in your blood damages the nerves that send signals to your brain.

Symptoms include:

- Tingling or numbness
- Burning or shooting pain
- Loss of balance
- Slow healing wounds
- Changes in the shape or color of your toes or feet
- Loss of sensation in your feet

Since blood flow to the feet is limited with diabetic neuropathy, they don't heal as quickly. If you don't feel pain in your feet, you may not notice blisters or cuts on your feet. If these wounds go unnoticed, it can lead to a serious infection.

Contact your doctor if you start to experience any of these symptoms and get your feet checked regularly so you can catch any issues early on.



If you have diabetic neuropathy, talk to your doctor about treatment options. They can help you choose a treatment plan that is right for you. If you are treated properly, you can manage your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Diabetic Foot Exam

Regular diabetic foot exams are crucial in diabetes care because they help doctors find foot health issues before they cause severe infection. During the exam, doctors will look for any issues with nerves or blood flow, signs of injury, and changes in foot shape, such as bunions or hammer toes.

People with diabetes should get a full foot exam once per year, but you may need more frequent exams if you have foot health issues. This exam can be done by your primary care doctor or a podiatrist (foot doctor). Here are a few things your doctor will check during your foot exam:

- **Skin check:** Looking at skin for dryness, blisters, sores, calluses, or other skin damage. They will also check your toenails for cracks or fungal infection.
- **Nerve check:** Making sure the nerves in your feet are working properly and to make sure you can feel your feet.
- **Muscle and bone check:** Checking for issues like bent or overlapping toes and bunions.
- **Blood vessel check:** Feeling the pulses in your foot and ankle. They will also compare the blood pressure readings from your arms and ankles. If the blood pressure in your ankle is lower, you may have decreased blood flow.



Other Ways to Practice Foot Care

The main way to prevent foot issues leading to infection is to get your feet checked regularly. However, there are other things you can do to decrease the risk of infection and diabetic neuropathy. Here are some things you can do to practice good foot care:

- Keep your blood sugar levels under control and exercise regularly to improve circulation.
- Check your feet regularly for changes in color, shape, or sensation.
- Wash and dry your feet thoroughly. Make sure you dry in between your toes.
- Apply moisturizer to your feet, but avoid applying it in between your toes.
- Wear shoes that fit well and provide support.
- Trim your toenails straight across and file down the edges.
- Avoid walking barefoot, especially outdoors.



Diabetes and Dental Care

Dental care is an important part of your health, especially for people with diabetes. Diabetes increases the risk of developing certain oral health issues, such as infections or gum disease. Prolonged high blood sugar levels weaken the immune system, making it more difficult for your body to heal wounds and fight infections. Below is some information on common dental complications for people with diabetes.

Thrush

Thrush is a fungal infection that causes white patches to appear in your mouth, as well as pain, bleeding, and more. High blood sugar levels cause the sugar in your saliva to increase. The fungus that causes thrush feeds off of sugar. If you have dry mouth, this also helps the yeast grow. Treatment typically includes medication.



Dry Mouth

Dry mouth is another oral health issue that can be caused by persistent high blood sugar levels. Dry mouth happens when you don't have enough saliva to keep your mouth wet. This can lead to bad breath, tooth decay and infections. Treatment typically includes medication and home remedies.



Periodontal Gum Disease

Periodontal gum disease is known as the inflammation and/or infection of the gum tissue that supports your teeth. This disease can lead to pain, bad breath, difficulty chewing, and possibly tooth loss. Having gum disease can make it more difficult to manage blood sugar levels, so it is important to take proper care of your teeth and gums. Treatment can include cleanings, mouth wash, and possibly gum surgery.

What to Know About Your Dental Exam

During a dental exam, your dental hygienist will clean your teeth to prevent tooth decay, gum disease and other issues. Your dentist will check your mouth to identify any issues early on so they can be treated.

- **Teeth Cleaning:** This includes the removal of plaque (bacteria buildup) using a metal tool, a tooth polish using a special tooth paste, and flossing.
- **X-rays:** If dental x-rays are needed, they will put a heavy lead apron on you to protect you from the radiation and you will bite down on a piece of plastic attached to an x-ray scanner. The scanner will take images of your mouth that your dentist will review with you.
- **Dentist's exam:** Your dentist will come in and check your gums and teeth for any signs of disease, infection, or decay. They will also check your bite, check you for oral cancer, and answer any questions you have. If your dentist identifies any issues, they will discuss possible treatment options with you. You may need to return for a follow up visit.

People with diabetes should get a dental exam at least twice per year, but it is best to ask your dentist how often you should get a check-up.

Make sure you tell your doctor you have diabetes so they can properly assess you for the common dental issues you are more likely to develop.



Other Ways to Prevent Dental Issues

Getting your teeth checked regularly is one of the best ways to get ahead of dental issues, but there are other ways you can prevent disease and infection, too! Here are a few tips on how to keep your mouth healthy.

1. **Tell your dentist you have diabetes.**

Make sure your dentist is aware that you have diabetes and what medications you are taking. This will help them provide personalized care.

2. **Brush and floss regularly.** Brush your teeth at least twice per day and floss once per day to remove plaque from your teeth and gums.

3. **Keep your blood sugar levels under control.** Since high blood sugar levels make it more difficult for your body to fight infection, it is important to regulate blood sugar levels to reduce the risk of dental issues.

4. **Quit smoking.** Smoking increases the risk of gum disease and tooth loss, which can lead to difficulty controlling blood sugars.

Call your dentist if you experience...

- Red, swollen, or bleeding gums
- Dry mouth
- Loose teeth
- Mouth pain
- Cracks in the lips or corners of your mouth
- White patches in your mouth



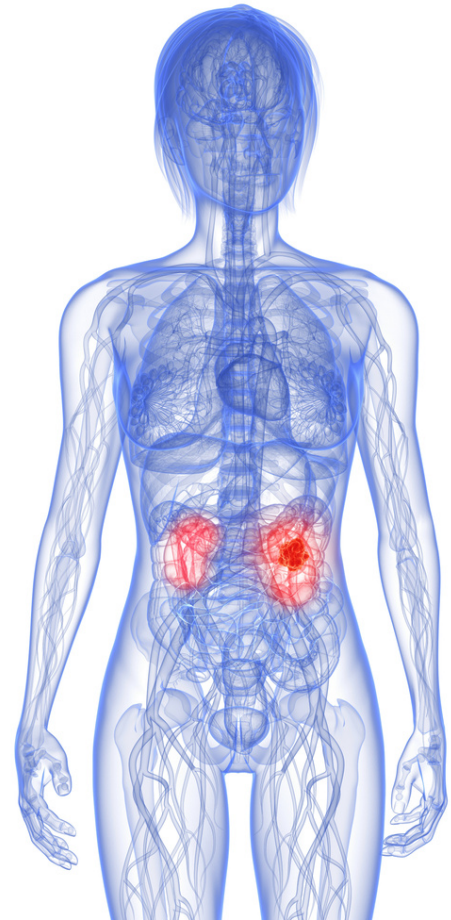
Diabetes and Kidney Health

Did you know that diabetes can affect your kidney health? If you have diabetes, it's important to get screened regularly for kidney disease. If left unchecked, kidney disease can lead to chronic kidney disease, which can lead to kidney failure, or possibly even dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Chronic Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease, also known as CKD, is a condition where the kidneys are damaged and no longer function normally. Kidney organs are responsible for filtering waste and extra fluid out of the blood to create urine. Kidneys also help control blood pressure, make red blood cells, and produce hormones. With CKD, your kidneys struggle to remove the waste and extra fluid, causing these to build up in the body. This build up can cause symptoms like high blood pressure, decreased urine output weak bones, nerve damage, swelling, nausea, and vomiting.

People with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing kidney disease. This is because high levels of sugar in the blood can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys, making it more difficult for them to filter waste. Waste products start to build up in the blood and then the kidneys start to fail.



According to the American Diabetes Association, 1 in 3 people with diabetes have chronic kidney disease

How to Prevent CKD

If you have diabetes, the best things you can do to prevent or slow the progression of CKD are manage your blood sugars and get regular renal screenings. Below is some information on renal screenings how to manage blood sugars.

What is a renal screening?

A renal screening typically involves 2 tests that help detect CKD: the eGFR test and the UACR test.

- **The eGFR test:** eGFR stands for estimated glomerular filtration rate and it is a measurement of how well your kidneys are filtering out waste and extra fluid from the body. A higher eGFR number indicates a higher percentage of kidney function while a lower eGFR number indicates a lower percentage of kidney function. A eGFR of 90 or above typically indicates normal kidney function in adults.
- **The uACR test:** uACR stands for urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio test and it measures the level of a protein called albumin in your urine. High levels of albumin in your urine can be an early sign of kidney disease. Ideally, your uACR should be below 30 mg/g.

Getting a renal screening is the only way to know if you have kidney disease. People with diabetes should get a renal screening every year. If you are already experiencing symptoms of CKD, talk to your doctor right away.

Preventative Care Action Plan

Take some time to create a plan to help you prevent other chronic conditions and stay up-to-date with screenings.

When was the last time you got screened?

Eye Screening _____

Foot Screening _____

Dental Screening _____

Renal (Kidney) Screening _____



Based on the recommendations for people with diabetes, which screenings are out of date?

Date/Time when you plan to schedule your appointments:

What are some questions/concerns you would like to talk to your health care provider about during your screenings?

What are 3 things you can do to prevent chronic complications associated with diabetes?
