

Chronic Complications from Diabetes:

Part 1- Heart Disease and Retinopathy

You may have some chronic health problems from your diabetes. These are problems that develop over time and are long lasting. High blood glucose levels cause damage to your blood vessels, nerves, and organs and cause these problems. You can prevent or delay them by managing your diabetes. This fact sheet will discuss chronic health problems related to heart disease and retinopathy. Retinopathy is damage to the blood vessels in your eye.

About Heart Disease

Also known as cardiovascular disease, affects and heart and blood vessels. It includes problems such as: **heart attack, stroke, and hypertension (high blood pressure)**. Over time, high blood glucose can affect the blood vessels and nerves in the heart, leading to heart problems.

Risk factors for heart disease:

- Poorly controlled blood glucose
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity (exercise)
- High triglycerides or high LDL cholesterol
- Smoking
- Family history of heart disease



How to manage your diabetes: There are 3 things you need to know: A, B & C. These stand for:

A1C	Blood Pressure	Cholesterol
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows blood glucose control for last 3 months• Goal for people with diabetes: A1c less than 7• Your doctor may give you a different goal number depending on your control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal for people with diabetes: 140/90 or less• Your doctor may give you a different goal number	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to keep your HDL (good) cholesterol:• Women: more than 40• Men: more than 50• Aim to keep LDL (bad) cholesterol: less than 100

You will get these tests when you go to the doctor. Your doctor will help set goals that are right for you.

To improve your ABCs, you can:



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About Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication where blood glucose can affect the blood vessels in the eyes over time. You may not be aware of the symptoms until retinopathy is much worse.

Symptoms of retinopathy include:

- Blurry vision
- Difficulty seeing small details
- Having a hard time reading
- Seeing black spots
- Sudden loss of sight in one or both eyes



Risk factors of retinopathy:

- Poorly controlled blood glucose
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Being pregnant
- Smoking
- Being African-American, Latinx or Marshallese
- Having diabetes for a long time

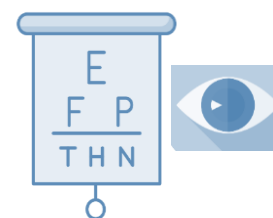
How to prevent or delay retinopathy:



Keep blood pressure
controlled



Keep blood glucose
controlled



Get an eye exam
every year

Management:

It's important to **visit an eye doctor annually to receive an eye exam**. If you have retinopathy, your eye doctor will treat it according to how severe it is. Early treatment can keep retinopathy from getting worse.