

# YOUR CARE POLMED

July 2020



## Understanding diabetic care



### Diabetics

Globally = ±463 million

South Africa = ± 4.5 million / ±1.4 million undiagnosed

## DIABETES

2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of natural deaths in South Africa.



### DANGERS OF UNCONTROLLED DIABETES

It's important to manage diabetes, as uncontrolled diabetes can increase the rate of hospital visits, but also:



Heart disease



Gum disease



Vision loss



Kidney disease



Amputations

### MANAGING DIABETES



#### REGULAR TESTS AND SCREENING

Regular testing helps to examine the impact of diabetes on your health. Each test is important for proper diabetes care and management.



#### Blood glucose test

- Used to measure the level of glucose in your blood
- Helps you track your progress post-diagnosis
- Food, stress, exercise and infections can affect your glucose levels
- It's recommended to fast for 8 to 10 hours before a glucose test - testing is often done first thing in the morning
- Healthy blood sugar levels should be **between 4 and 6 mmol/L**



#### HbA1c test

- Used to measure the level of glycated haemoglobin - develops when haemoglobin joins with glucose in the blood
- Helps your doctor get an overall picture of your blood glucose levels
- Test at least twice a year (every 6 months)
- A healthy HbA1c reading for a diabetic should be **6.5% (48 mmol/mol)**
- The higher the HbA1c reading, the greater the risk of developing diabetes-related complications



#### Blood pressure and cholesterol readings

- Diabetics are 2 to 4 times more likely to die from cardiovascular disease than those not living with diabetes
- Blood pressure and cholesterol readings help to determine your risk for heart disease
- A healthy blood pressure reading for diabetics should be around **135/85 mm Hg and below 140/90 mm Hg**
- Healthy cholesterol reading should be:
  - Total cholesterol: under 4.0 mmol/l
  - LDL levels: below 2.0 mmol/l
  - HDL levels: at least 1.0 mmol/l (men) or 1.2 mmol/l (women)
  - Triglyceride levels: less than (or equal to) 1.7 mmol/l



#### YOUR DIABETIC CARE TEAMS

To manage your diabetes, you'll need a care team that includes a dietician, an ophthalmologist and a podiatrist.



#### A dietician

- A well-managed diet can maintain healthy blood sugar levels
- A dietician creates a plan and offers advice that will help you get all the necessary nutrients in your diet
- A dietician takes note of medication and lifestyle habits when creating the plan



#### An ophthalmologist

- An ophthalmologist is an eye doctor
- Diabetes complications may affect eye health, and it can even lead to blindness
- Diabetics should visit their ophthalmologist once a year for an eye exam



#### A podiatrist

- A podiatrist is a foot doctor
- Uncontrolled diabetes can increase the risk of foot infections and amputations
- A podiatrist examines your foot health and advises on how to keep them healthy



#### MEDICATION

- Medication will be prescribed to help manage your condition
- The medication will help to regulate insulin levels
- You should always take your medication as prescribed and refill your prescription when needed
- Not taking your medication may worsen your diabetes symptoms
- Only stop taking your medication on your doctor's orders

To get more information regarding chronic medication authorisation please contact Polmed Chronic Medicine management department on 0860 765 633 (follow the voice prompts) or email [polmedcmm@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmedcmm@medscheme.co.za)  
To receive a copy of the diabetes care plan please send an email to [polmedapmb@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmedapmb@medscheme.co.za)

#### References

- <https://www.idf.org/e-library/epidemiology-research/diabetes-atlas/159-idf-diabetes-atlas-ninth-edition-2019.html>
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- <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/blood-glucose/what-affects-blood-glucose-levels.html>
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- [https://professional.diabetes.org/sites/professional.diabetes.org/files/media/Eyes\\_-\\_Eye\\_Tests\\_for\\_People\\_with\\_Diabetes.pdf](https://professional.diabetes.org/sites/professional.diabetes.org/files/media/Eyes_-_Eye_Tests_for_People_with_Diabetes.pdf)
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- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22903734/>
- <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/Diabetes-and-cholesterol.html>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/type2-and-medication/>

If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to [polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za) with your membership number and contact details.