

# YOUR CARE POLMED

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## Struggling to keep your diabetes under control?



**463 million** diabetics in the world

**4.5 million** in SA = highest proportion of adult diabetics in Africa.

With diabetes being the **2ND** leading natural cause of death in South Africa, proper management is essential.

Diabetics who don't manage their condition face a higher risk of complications related to **COVID-19**, including a higher mortality risk.

### SYMPTOMS OF UNCONTROLLED DIABETES

#### Uncontrolled diabetes can increase the risk of:

- Heart disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Gum disease
- Nerve damage
- Vision loss
- Kidney disease
- Infections and even amputation



#### Signs of your diabetes not being under control include:

- High blood glucose readings
- Frequent infections
- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Changes in appetite
- Weight loss
- Fruity odour to the breath
- Chronic fatigue



### MANAGING DIABETES

There are many ways to manage diabetes. This does not only include taking medication, but also exercising regularly and following a balanced diet.



#### Medication

- Medication helps to manage your diabetes by regulating insulin levels
- You should always take your medication as prescribed
- Not taking your medication may worsen your diabetes symptoms and increase your risk of complications
- You should not stop taking your medication unless your doctor has indicated that it's safe to do so
- Diabetes is a chronic condition, so you may need to take medication for the rest of your life



#### Physical activity

- Exercise can help you manage your diabetes as it helps regulate blood glucose levels and reduce the risk of complications
- Diabetics need at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week
- A biokineticist is professionally trained to prescribe specific exercise programs and can help to get you started with an effective plan and help you create a personalised fitness regime
- Home-based exercises include brisk walking, skipping with a jump rope, body-weight strength exercises, and dancing
- It's important to include strength training two to three times a week. If you don't have dumbbells or kettlebells, you can use objects like bottles or buckets (filled with water or sand)



#### Diet

- Your diet plays a vital role in managing diabetes
- The wrong foods can elevate blood glucose levels and the right foods can help to prevent glucose spikes
- Consult a dietician, who can help develop a personalised eating plan
- Foods with a low glycaemic index (GI) are good for controlling blood sugar levels. Examples include:
  - Wholegrain bread, rolled oats, unrefined maize, and barley
  - Legumes such as chickpeas, kidney beans, and lentils
  - Walnuts, macadamias, hazelnuts, almonds, and cashews are low GI snacks
- Look to include fatty fish like salmon, sardines, anchovies, and mackerel
- Seeds like pumpkin, sunflower, chia, flax seeds are also good
- It's best to eat, on average, 5 fruit and/or vegetable portions per day:
  - Vegetables with a low GI include carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, and green beans
  - Fruits with a low GI include apples, avocados, grapefruit, and pears

### DIABETICS SHOULD AVOID THE FOLLOWING FOODS:

- Fast foods
- Processed foods and meats
- Flavoured yoghurt (generally high in sugar)
- Sweet treats
- Alcoholic and sugary drinks, including fruit juice and sodas/fizzy drinks
- Dried fruit

#### References

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