

Thrive

WINTER 2016

[with Diabetes]



Fair Warning

If your blood sugar isn't in check, you're putting your entire body in danger

Asustained high blood sugar (glucose) level is a serious problem for people with diabetes. But glucose isn't always the villain it's made out to be. In fact, the molecule found in starches and sugars is essential to a healthy life because its energy helps to replenish the entire body. "Every cell needs to be opened up and fed a form of glucose," says David Marrero, PhD, the president of healthcare and education for the American Diabetes Association.

That process can't happen without insulin, a hormone that acts as the "key" to opening those cells.

Someone with diabetes has trouble producing enough insulin or is resistant to it, which means without treatment there's a risk that the glucose will build up in the bloodstream, possibly wreaking havoc as it pulses throughout the body.

"Imagine you could never filter the oil in your car, and instead of changing it, you just kept adding more," Dr. Marrero says. "Soon it's going to find its way into the engine and cause chaos."

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Here, we break down the parts of the body that are most susceptible to being bullied by high blood sugar, along with tips from the American Diabetes Association on how to ensure your body stays as healthy as possible. But make sure you stay in touch with your healthcare providers, especially if conditions worsen.



At Risk: Nerves

A buildup of glucose can cause nerves to misfire. “The body loses the ability to transmit signals to the brain correctly,” Dr. Marrero says. Such neuropathy can lead to tingling or painful limbs—or even the loss of all sensation. Just imagine the damage if someone with severe neuropathy stepped on a piece of glass or a sharp pebble and was unaware of the injury.

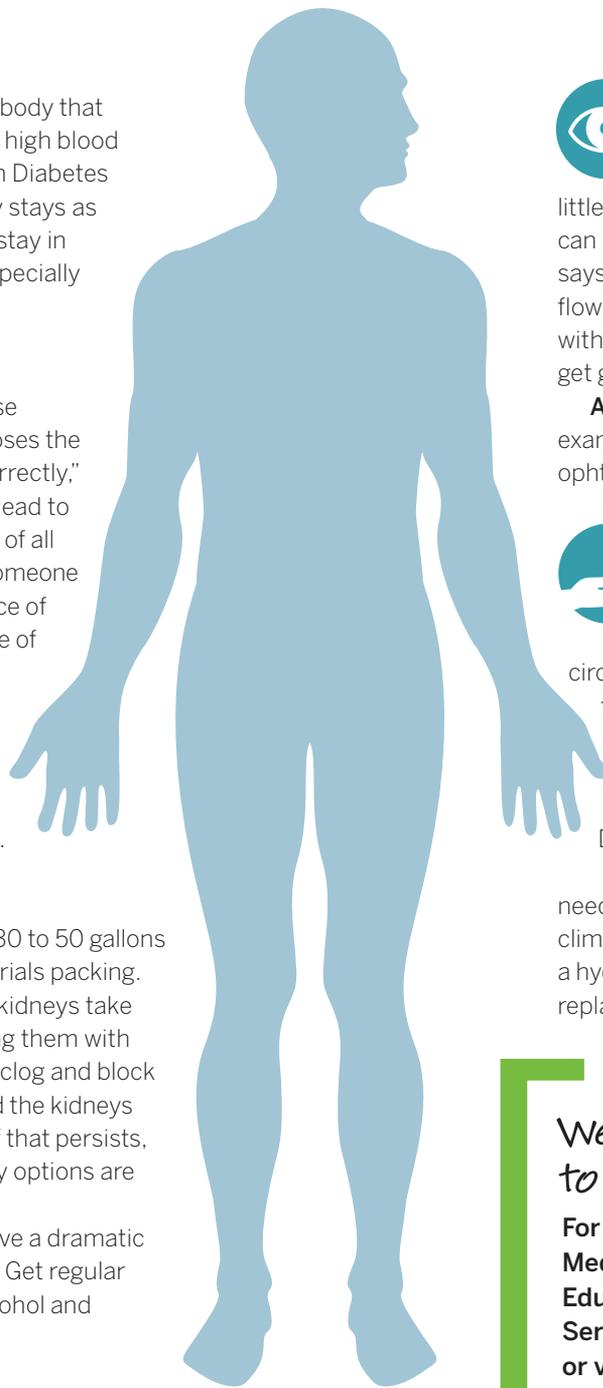
Act now: Examine your feet daily for cuts or injuries, Dr. Marrero says. At least once a year have a complete foot exam, which includes a look at the muscles, bones and blood flow.



At Risk: Kidneys

Every day, your kidneys filter 30 to 50 gallons of blood, sending toxins and waste materials packing. “With an increased level of glucose, the kidneys take a pounding,” says Dr. Marrero, comparing them with overtaxed furnace filters that eventually clog and block airflow. “Eventually, the capability to feed the kidneys oxygen and energy is diminished—and if that persists, they stop working.” At that point, the only options are dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Act now: High blood pressure can have a dramatic effect on the progress of kidney disease. Get regular exercise, lose any extra weight, avoid alcohol and tobacco, and eat less salt.



At Risk: Eyes

People with diabetes often develop eye problems. “The little vessels carrying blood to your eyes can become impaired,” Dr. Marrero says. This can lead to decreased blood flow and damage to the retina. People with diabetes are also more likely to get glaucoma and cataracts.

Act now: Have a dilated eye exam with an optometrist or an ophthalmologist at least once a year.



At Risk: Skin

High glucose levels make the blood thicker, which means it’s harder for the circulatory system to pump nutrients to peripheral parts of the body, such as fingers and toes, leaving them dry. “Dry skin is more prone to cracking and injury,” Dr. Marrero says.

Act now: Only bathe when you need to, especially in low-humidity climates. Use mild soap, and apply a hydrating cream after bathing to replace lost moisture.

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to Help You

For information about Parrish
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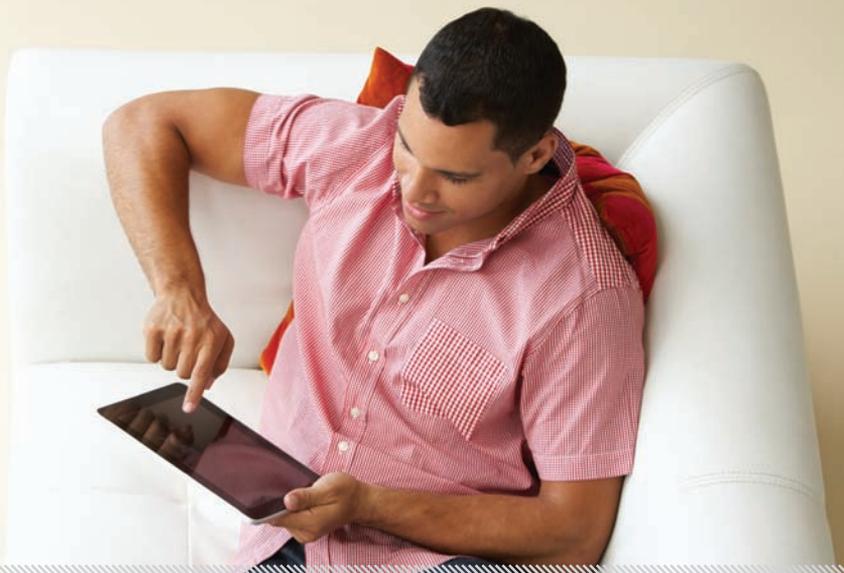
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Knowledge Is Power. Become Powerful!

Learn to take care of your diabetes by attending Parrish Medical Center's Diabetes Education Program. Small-group classes and individual appointments are available for you and a support person. A follow-up class can serve as a refresher and help you with problem-solving and fine-tuning your diabetes management. Nutrition services are also offered for people who want help with weight loss, carbohydrate counting and meal planning.

A physician referral is required. Medicare and most insurance programs cover diabetes self-management education and nutrition counseling. Classes are offered in Port St. John, Titusville and, coming this spring, Health Village East. For more information, call **321-268-6699**.





Thrive is published as a service to friends and neighbors by Parrish Medical Center, 951 N. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL 32796. Material in *Thrive* is obtained from a wide range of medical scientists and healthcare authorities. If you have any concerns about specific items that appear in *Thrive*, consult your personal physician about their effects on your health. © 2016 MANIFEST LLC

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Deep Sleep Needed

There are many stages of sleep that serve to restore your body through the night. TV, caffeine and light can prevent you from reaching those stages.

“For instance, those who fall asleep with the TV on will not reach their deep, good delta sleep,” says Kristina Weaver, Parrish Sleep Disorders Center technician and educator. “Their brains are kept in a faster brain-wave activity due to the noise. If you don’t reach enough delta sleep at least six nights a week, your immune system is suppressed by 300 percent.”

And not reaching your delta sleep will make it that much harder to transition to the dream state, the most restorative for your brain. A lack in reaching the dream state can also cause crankiness, forgetfulness and productivity loss.

To get the best sleep, make sure your room is dark, cool and quiet.

