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Learn to manage diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which the body either doesn't make enough insulin (a hormone used to convert sugar, starches, and other food into the energy needed for everyday life), or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in the blood. If not managed or treated properly, diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, high blood pressure and blindness.

Fortunately, with the proper tools and education, people with diabetes can learn to self-manage the disease and live a healthy life.

Accountability, knowledge and behavior change are all effective means to the self-management of diabetes. Physicians, diabetes educators, nutritionists and other diabetes practitioners work to empower people with diabetes to take control of their disease and actively participate in their care.

Sturdy's Diabetes Management Program promotes the American Association of Diabetes Educators self-care behavior framework, which encompasses seven goals: healthy eating, being active, monitoring blood sugar, taking medication, problem solving, reducing risks and healthy coping. Each are significant steps to improved well-being while living with diabetes.

Because diabetes is a progressive, demanding condition, it's necessary to work with a health care team to understand each aspect of care. Your physician and diabetes educator will determine appropriate medications and help you overcome any physical or emotional barriers to healthy behaviors. Understanding the disease, as well as incorporating the seven self-care behaviors into your treatment, will help control your diabetes more effectively.

When committing to living well with

Health notes at Sturdy

diabetes, it's important to meet with your care team on a regular basis to set achievable goals. As part of a complete diabetes management plan, additional steps should be taken to further reduce risks and complications, such as:

- ▶ Quitting smoking
- ▶ Regular eye, foot and dental examinations
- ▶ Blood pressure monitoring
- ▶ Self-monitoring blood glucose
- ▶ Making healthy food choices
- ▶ Controlling weight
- ▶ Exercising

Additional tools, like mobile apps, are available to allow easy monitoring of these new behaviors. These apps include fitness tracking, food journals and logging progress towards goals. Another helpful resource is diabetes healthy living magazines, which include recipes, body well-being tips, along with other diabetes topics, tips and tricks. Though monitoring fitness and nutrition is important, daily self monitoring of blood glucose is essential to providing insight as to how these activities and foods affect your health.

Sturdy's Diabetes Management Program, recognized by the American Diabetes Association, is an interactive education process led by a diabetes educator. The multidisciplinary program aims to assess, identify and assist people with diabetes and their families. It incorporates education on ways to best manage diabetes and prevent complications and works in conjunction with several other hospital departments.

To learn more about the program, call 508-236-7151.