

Major Complications with Diabetes

Please contact your Tria Health pharmacist to discuss ways you can prevent, treat, and lessen these diabetes complications with medication changes or lifestyle recommendations!

Complications	Concerns	Management/Risks/Preventions
Heart (Cardiovascular) Disease	<p>Patients with diabetes are two times more likely to have heart disease or stroke, which is the number one cause of death in diabetes. Patients with heart disease may have blocked or clogged arteries (atherosclerosis), heart failure, or an irregular heartbeat.</p> <p>Atherosclerosis occurs when there is a blockage of blood flow to the heart or brain from plaque build-up. Blood vessels may stiffen and narrow preventing proper blood to the heart and brain. This causes heart attacks and strokes.</p> <p>Heart failure occurs when the heart muscles are too weak to pump nutrient-rich blood to the rest of the body.</p>	<p>To help lower the risk of heart attacks and strokes, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and lower blood pressure. • Maintain a healthy weight with diet and exercise. • Avoid alcohol and smoking. • A1c monitoring. • Some patients may benefit from a low-dose aspirin daily to help lower the risk of heart attacks. Ask your doctor or Tria Pharmacist to know if you might benefit.
Nerves and Feet	<p>Diabetic Neuropathy is a condition caused by extra sugar in the blood and can cause nerve damage. About 50% of patients with diabetes have some degree of nerve damage and are at higher risk for foot or leg amputations. Symptoms of neuropathy include burning, numbness, tingling, or weakness in your legs, feet, hands, and arms. The loss of feeling in your feet especially increases the risk for injuries and infections. Poor blood flow affects how effective the body can heal or fight infection.</p> <p>Diabetic Neuropathy can also cause nerve damage throughout the body increasing the risk for GI problems, dizziness, urinary problems, and sexual side effects.</p>	<p>Patients are recommended to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash, clean, and visually inspect your feet daily. • Avoid walking barefoot or soaking your feet. • A yearly monofilament foot exam to ensure sensations are still intact. • Medications may help ease discomfort.
Kidneys	<p>Kidneys are the body's natural filter, to get rid of waste and toxins and hold onto minerals and nutrients that the body needs. Elevated blood sugars can overwhelm the kidneys and add extra work filtering too much blood. Over time, the kidneys may start to break down and lose important protein because of the extra work filtering more blood and sugar.</p> <p>Damage to the kidneys can result in chronic kidney disease and kidney damage. Kidney failure can lead to end-stage renal disease (ESRD) requiring dialysis or kidney transplant. Diabetes is one of the 2 leading causes (along with high blood pressure) of kidney disease in the United States.</p>	<p>To help prevent and decrease the risk for kidney damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and lower blood pressure with diet, exercise, watch salt intake, avoiding tobacco and alcohol and medication adherence. • Lower blood sugars to goal levels. • Yearly urinalysis/kidney exam.
Oral Health	<p>The risk of gum disease is high in patients with diabetes. Signs or symptoms of gum disease include swollen, receding, bleeding gums and persistent bad breath. Diabetes may increase the body's response to bad bacteria found in the mouth resulting in loose teeth or tissue loss.</p>	<p>To reduce the risk of gum disease, brush your teeth twice daily and floss once a day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your dentist at least twice a year. • Use a soft toothbrush. • If you wear dentures, clean and rinse daily.
Eye Health	<p>Consistently high blood sugar may lead to eye complications such as retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts and blindness. Diabetic retinopathy occurs when there is damage to blood vessels at the back of the eye with severe cases causing blindness. Glaucoma occurs when there is pressure build up causing pinching of blood vessels leading to the retina and nerve. Cataracts are when the eye's lens become cloudy.</p>	<p>It is important to have diabetes eye exams at least once a year with your eye doctor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to manage and lower your blood pressure and blood sugars.