Nurse/Educator: check (√) each category box when instruction is complete.

These survival skills are provided to support basic diabetes management. Diabetes is a complex disease. We suggest you talk to your health care provider regarding additional services and education that may be available and appropriate for you.

☐ Diabetes Basics

Diabetes is a disorder of an organ in the body called the pancreas. The pancreas has cells that make insulin. Insulin is the hormone in the body that allows glucose (sugar) in the blood to get into cells. In people with diabetes, either the pancreas doesn’t make enough insulin or the insulin can’t be used properly.

Type 1 Diabetes – Your body has stopped making insulin.

   Symptoms: Thirst, Frequent Urination, Blurred Vision, Infections and/or Hunger

   Treatment: Healthy Eating, Moderate Exercise, Blood Glucose Testing, Insulin

Type 2 Diabetes – Your insulin doesn’t work the way it should.
You may also be making less insulin.

   Symptoms: Thirst, Frequent Urination, Blurred Vision, Infections and/or Hunger

   Treatment: Healthy Eating, Moderate Exercise, Blood Glucose Testing, Possible Medication and Weight Control
Treatment of High and Low Blood Sugar

**High Sugar** – Blood sugars that are over 160 for an entire week, or over 300 for two or more consecutive readings.

**Causes:** Eating too much carbohydrate at once, not enough exercise, not enough medication, illness, infection, certain medications, stress

**Symptoms:** Thirst, Frequent Urination, Blurred Vision, Headache

**Treatment:** Follow meal plan, increase exercise (if <250), and call MD for possible medication adjustments

**Low Sugar** – Blood sugars that are below 70.

**Causes:** Not enough food, too much exercise, too much medication

**Symptoms:** Shakiness, Dizziness, Confusion, Blurred Vision, Sweating, Hunger

**Treatment:** drink or eat something with fast acting sugar* to quickly raise blood sugar. Rest for 15 minutes and recheck blood sugar. If still below 70, repeat the fast acting sugar and retest in 15 minutes. If sugar is still below 70 take in more fast acting sugar and call your doctor. If sugar is above 70 then a snack should be eaten to maintain stable blood sugar level.

*Examples of fast acting sugars: ½ cup of juice or regular soda, 1 cup of low-fat/skim milk, or 3-4 glucose tablets.

Diabetes Medications

Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor. If a medication doesn’t agree with you, you have trouble getting it, or there is any other reason you are unable to take it as ordered, call your doctor to let them know. They may need to change how they plan to help you manage your blood sugar.
□ **Sick Day Rules**
Having a cold or the flu is definitely no fun. If you have diabetes, it can also make your blood glucose levels hard to control. Always talk to your diabetes team about what you should do when you get sick.

Here are some tips on what you can do to help keep your blood glucose in check:

- Keep taking your insulin! You may think you don’t need as much since you are not eating as much, but when you are sick you may actually need more.
- Eat regularly. You may not have much of an appetite, but it’s important to try to get some carbs at meal times. If you’re having trouble keeping food down try sports drinks, juice, soup broth, or a frozen fruit bar.
- Drink a lot of water. When you’re sick you’re in danger of becoming dehydrated. Avoid caffeinated drinks. If you have trouble keeping fluids down, drink small amounts (sips, or just a teaspoon or so) every few minutes. This will help keep you from getting dehydrated.
- Check your blood glucose often (every 2-4 hours). Since blood glucose can be hard to control when you’re sick, it’s good to keep a close eye on it.
- Check your ketones often. The biggest danger when you’re sick is DKA (Diabetes Ketoacidosis), especially if you have vomiting and/or diarrhea. If ketones get too high and you don’t treat it, you could get even sicker.

*Again, be sure to call your diabetes team when you are sick for specific guidance!*  

□ **Blood Sugar Monitoring**
Monitoring your blood sugar level is very important with any type of diabetes. You should check your blood sugar at least once a day or more depending on the medications you use and your doctor’s orders.

When checking your blood sugar, make sure your hands are cleaned with warm soapy water, rinsed well and dried. Use a new, clean lancet every time you test. Be sure to pierce the side of your finger tip and to use different fingers to prevent calluses. Write down all blood sugar readings in a log book and bring it to your health care provider.

Check the expiration date on test strips and the code number on the strips, if that applies. Dispose of all testing lancets in a container as required by your Town Health Department.

□ **Exercise**
Everyone, especially those with pre-diabetes or diabetes, should aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days. Walking, gardening, yard work, swimming, house cleaning or anything that increases your heart rate and causes you to break a light sweat will help to meet this goal.
What Should I Eat?

People with diabetes should follow the same general guidelines as everyone else. Eating the right kinds of foods in the right amounts can help you to control your diabetes. One way to ensure a healthy meal is the plate method. You can use this method by:

- Filling 1/2 of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots and green beans

- Filling 1/4 of your plate with protein foods (3-4 ounces of fish, poultry or lean meat)

- Filling 1/4 of your plate with starchy carbohydrate foods, whole grains or potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or starchy vegetables

- Adding a small piece of fruit or 8 ounces of skim or low-fat milk, which are additional carbohydrate choices

- Using 1-2 teaspoons of heart-healthy vegetable oil or tub margarine

For **breakfast**, fill two quarters of the plate but not the other half.

For **lunch and dinner**, fill the entire 9” plate.