



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **Leader Training Guide**

#### **Living with Diabetes**

**Objectives:** Through this lesson, participants should learn coping strategies and stress relief for those with diabetes.

**Lesson Overview/Introduction:** There is no cure for diabetes, but it can be managed it through a balanced diet, exercise and medicine (if prescribed). Controlling your weight, stress and caring for your body will help your live and long and healthy life.

#### **Types of Diabetes**

**Diabetes** is a condition with elevated blood sugar (glucose). There are several types which are:

**Type I Diabetes** is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin. Treatment can help, but the condition cannot be cured.

**Type II Diabetes** is a chronic condition that deals with the way the body processes blood sugar (glucose)

**Prediabetes** is a condition in which blood sugar is high, but not high enough to be type II diabetes. Changing your lifestyle can help with this condition.

#### **Diagnoses**

Doctors can test your blood glucose level through an A1C test. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose for the past 2 to 3 months. Diabetes is diagnosed at an A1C of greater than or equal to 6.5%

#### **Food Choices**

Whether you are a prediabetes or a diagnosed diabetic, you should be careful about what you eat. Eating well to reach or stay at a healthy weight helps in lowering your risk for type 2 diabetes. Some tips are:

- Reduce the starchy foods and replace them with non-starchy veggies such as carrots, broccoli, green beans, kale, cauliflower and others.
- Choose lean meats (such as skinless chicken, turkey and lean cuts of pork or beef such as sirloin or round roast)
- Lower fat dairy products (like low-fat or skim milk and fat free or low-fat yogurt).

- Choose whole grains over refined grains that are processed. Choose brown rice, barley and quinoa
- Choose healthy fats in small amounts. For cooking, use oils such as olive, canola, sunflower or peanut. For salads, some healthy additions are nuts, seeds, avocado and vinaigrettes.

### **Stress**

Everyone deals with diabetes differently. You may need time to find out what helps you. Here are some ideas that have helped others:

- Set goals, but don't expect perfection. Breakdown all the things you do to control your diabetes into small steps. Some people become discouraged when they focus too much on the final outcome. Instead celebrate when you achieve even a few steps toward your final goal.
- Learn how to relax - Diabetes can cause stress. Good stress reducers are moderate exercise, deep breathing, thinking about pleasant places or enjoying a hobby. Plan time to relax every day and your diabetes control may improve.
- Share your feelings with your medical team and family. Don't assume other people know how you feel. Talk about your concerns to find ways to handle them better. You may handle things better once an understanding person listens.
- Join a support group - Many people find diabetic support groups helpful. No one understands your struggle better than someone who also has diabetes. Support groups can also expose you to new diabetes management ideas.
- Keep a journal - Sometimes writing down your thoughts relieves some of the pressure. Just seeing your concerns in black and white

### **Physical Activity**

Physical activity and exercise is one of the most important things we can do to manage diabetes, prevent other diseases and stay strong and independent as we age. The recommendation for adults to maintain health is to be moderately active for 30 minutes per day—and more is better. That activity does not need to be done all at once to maintain health. You can be active for 10 minutes at a time as long as it adds up to 30 minutes or more over the course of the day.

## Foot Care

Foot problems are common for people with diabetes. An ordinary problem can get worse and lead to serious complications for these individuals.

“Foot problems most often happen when there is nerve damage, also called neuropathy. This can cause tingling, pain (burning or stinging), or weakness in the foot. It can also cause loss of feeling in the foot, so you can injure it and not know it. Poor blood flow or changes in the shape of your feet or toes may also cause problems.” (American Diabetic Association)

Diabetes caused feet to dry out, crack and peel. Control this by sealing the moisture in your feet after bathing. Spread a thin coat of plain petroleum jelly, unscented hand cream, or other such products over your feet.

Keep oils or creams out from the toes. This extra moisture can lead to infection. Also, don't soak your feet — that can dry your skin also.

Visit to a podiatrist is recommended for any foot condition. Make your visit before it becomes a problem.

## Eye Care

Diabetes leads to increased risk of eye problems and may lead to blindness. Most diabetic individuals have nothing more than minor eye disorders.

With regular checkups, you can keep minor problems minor. Visit you optometrist regularly.

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### **Sources:**

- Adapted from “Coping the Diabetes”, The University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences, Connie Crawley, MS, RD, LD Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist
- American Diabetic Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/foot-complications>