

# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

## Diabetes and the Flu

### If you have diabetes a flu shot could save your life



Did you know that a flu shot can be a lifesaver if you have diabetes? The flu is a serious illness for anyone, but if you have diabetes, you are more likely to be sicker longer, go to the hospital, or even die. People with diabetes are almost three times more likely to die with flu or pneumonia. One flu shot can help protect you against getting sick. When you live with diabetes, you watch your diet, exercise, and see your doctor regularly. Now you can add an annual flu vaccine to your routine. It is one more way to stay in control of your diabetes.

### Take Control

Consider the odds:

- \* During flu epidemics, deaths among people with diabetes increase 5-15%.
- \* People with diabetes are six times more likely to be hospitalized with flu complications.
- \* Each year, 10,000-30,000 deaths among people with diabetes are associated with the flu.

### Who should get a flu shot?

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. People at high risk for complications from the flu should be vaccinated. This includes children from six months to their fifth birthday, people 50 years or older, pregnant women and people of any age that have certain chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes.



### Where do I get a flu shot?

Contact your doctor, healthcare provider or local health department for dates, times and places where flu vaccines are given.

# Diabetes Complications

If you have diabetes and don't take good care of yourself, over time, it can cause some problems. How you and your child take care of diabetes now affects what happens in the future. You may not think it is that big a deal if your child's blood glucose is a little high. Your child may feel just fine, but hyperglycemia is a strain on the body and it can cause problems if untreated. These problems are called complications. Some diabetes complications include:



- **Neuropathy** is nerve damage. It can cause problems in legs as well as other systems in the body.
- **Retinopathy** is damage to the eyes.
- **Nephropathy** is kidney disease. The kidneys filter waste out of the blood. When they don't work well, poisons can build up.
- **Heart disease** is more common in people with diabetes.

It can be difficult for children to understand why diabetes care is so important. Often, children and teens have trouble understanding how what they do can effect the future. Children and especially teens may sometimes want to slack off on diabetes care and say that complications will "never happen to me." Or, they may be the opposite and feel like they will have problems no matter what, so why bother? If this happens, it is important to try to understand where your child is coming from. It may help to talk a little bit about how frustrating diabetes care can be. Let your child vent. Then steer your talk back to how good diabetes care today can help prevent problems. [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

## Dining On Time

If you take diabetes pills or insulin shots, it pays to think about *when* you will eat as well as *what* you will eat. You can avoid problems by planning ahead.



- If you're eating out with others, ask them to eat at your usual time.
- Make reservations and be on time. Avoid times when the restaurant is busiest so you won't have to wait.
- Ask whether "special" dishes will take extra time.
- If your lunch or dinner is going to be later than usual, eat a fruit or starch serving from that meal at your usual mealtime.
- If the dinner will be very late, you can eat your bedtime snack at your usual dinner time. Then, eat your full dinner at the later hour. You may need to adjust your insulin to do this.

## Rate Your Plate

A quick way to make sure you are eating a variety of healthful foods at each meal is to Rate Your Plate. This is a great way to practice portion control if you are trying to lose weight. When you sit down for a meal, draw an imaginary line through the center of your plate. Then, draw a line to divide one section into two.

- About one-fourth of your plate should be filled with grains or starchy foods such as rice, pasta, potatoes, corn or peas.
- Another fourth should be protein – foods like meat, fish, poultry or tofu.
- The other half of your plate, should be filled with non starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes and cauliflower.
- Then, add a glass of non-fat milk and a small roll or piece of fruit and you are ready to eat!

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

## Free Diabetes Services



**Individual Nutrition Counseling**  
Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center  
1344 22nd Street S.  
St. Petersburg  
Call for appointment—824-8122

**Diabetes Education and Self Management**  
St. Petersburg Free Clinic  
863 3rd Ave. N.  
St. Petersburg  
Call for more information - 321-4141



Funding for this newsletter was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 03135 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. Government.

For information about Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County visit our website: [www.StepsFL.com](http://www.StepsFL.com) or call 2-1-1 (Pinellas County cell phone users must call 727-210-4211)