

Daily Life with Diabetes

February 4th is **National Wear Red Day** to raise awareness of heart disease

Did you know that if you have diabetes you have a higher risk for heart disease. In fact, heart disease is the leading killer of people who have diabetes. It is important for people with diabetes to know their ABC's to reduce their risk.

A is for A1c. Do you know what your A1c is? This test will give you your 2-3 month average blood sugar. The American Diabetes Association recommends A1c goal of less than 7% to lower your risk for complications from diabetes. If you have diabetes, you should have this test done every 3-6 months.

B is for blood pressure. If you have diabetes, your blood pressure target is below 130/80. If you have a history of high blood pressure, your doctor may ask you to monitor your blood pressure at home. If your blood pressure is too high, it could increase your risk for heart attack and stroke. Following a healthy meal plan that is low in sodium can help you reach your blood pressure target.

C is for Cholesterol. High levels of cholesterol can also increase your risk for heart disease. A complete cholesterol test, referred to as a lipid panel or lipid profile, includes the measurement of four types of fats (lipids) in your blood, low-density lipoprotein (LDL), high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, total cholesterol and triglycerides.

LDL is sometimes called the "bad" cholesterol. Targets for cholesterol are: LDL less than 100mg/dl (your doctor may say less than 70mg/dl too if you have other risks for heart disease). Too much of it in your blood causes the accumulation of fatty deposits (plaques) in your arteries (atherosclerosis), which reduces blood flow.

HDL is sometimes called the "good" cholesterol because it helps carry away LDL cholesterol, thus keeping arteries open and blood flowing more freely. It is recommended that women with diabetes have HDL above 50, and that men with diabetes have HDL cholesterol above 40.

Total cholesterol is the sum of your blood's cholesterol content.

Triglycerides are another type of fat in the blood. When you eat, your body converts any calories it doesn't need to use right away into triglycerides, which are stored in fat cells and released later for energy.

The things you are doing to help keep your blood sugars under control will also help with your **ABCs**. Following a healthy meal plan with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain foods and healthy fats will not only help control the **ABCs**, but also make you feel great. Including 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week will also help you meet your goals. Some people will need medications to maintain healthy **ABCs**. Talk to your doctor about what your levels are and what you can do to reach your target!

Here's a healthy recipe to support going **Red** in February:

Stuffed Red Bell Peppers: Stuff 1 red bell pepper (cored) with ½ cup cooked brown rice, ¼ diced red onion, ¼ cup ground turkey (browned), 1 tbsp. parsley, salt and pepper. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes or until pepper is heated through.

If you have any questions about this information or diabetes, talk to your health care provider or call the Diabetes Education office at 386-943-4727.

