

SMOKING CESSATION AND DIABETES

Positive lifestyle changes and routine screening efforts can help prevent many diabetes-related complications. Prevention of cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) disease is an important aspect of care and goal planning for people with diabetes. Smoking cigarettes or the use of other tobacco products can lead to a wide variety of medical problems that include cardiovascular disease. The use of tobacco products is a major risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease. The diagnosis of diabetes is another major risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease because elevated blood cholesterol levels are often identified. In Type II diabetes, the cholesterol levels can be near normal, but the heavier type of LDL cholesterol has a greater tendency to cause plaque formation and inflammation of the inner lining of the blood vessels. Blood vessel plaque and inflammation can reduce or block blood flow throughout the body. Additionally, blood clots can form on the plaque surface or portions of the plaque may break off into the blood stream. Potential complications that may occur as a result of reduced or obstructed blood flow are heart attack, enlarged heart, stroke, visual impairment or blindness, kidney disease or reduced blood flow to the legs and arms (peripheral vascular disease). The good news is that no matter how much or how long you have smoked, as soon as you quit your risk for developing heart disease and other related problems is reduced. The longer you stay smoke free, the more your risk decreases.

Plan your strategy to quit smoking. In your action plan consider the following:

- Discuss your plan with your physician. Your physician may make recommendations for exercise as a diversional activity. You may need guidelines for tracking and controlling your blood glucose levels when you exercise.
- Your physician may recommend medication to help you quit. Check with the Member Service Team at (800) 282-5385 or (800) 385-9952 (Spanish line) to determine if you have any coverage on your benefit plan for these medications.
- Explore the benefits of quitting the smoking habit (make a list).
- Develop a list of people and resources that you can contact for support.
- Draw up a contract that identifies your quit date and list of reasons you choose to quit.
- Consider what triggers your urge to smoke and how you might avoid them. There may be alternative activities you may want to consider (e.g.: take a walk, brush your teeth, talk on the phone).
- Keep nutritious snacks ready and available as needed (vegetables, fruit high in water content and low in sugar/glycemic index, sugar free gum and sugar free hard candy).
- Take time to relax with slow deep breaths. This will relax you and reinforce the positive effects of having clean air filling your lungs.
- Avoid environments where others smoke. Second hand smoke can trigger the urge to smoke and is not healthy for you.
- Make it your goal to be smoke free one day at a time.

Other resources are available at:

The American Lung Association
61 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10006
(800) LUNGUSA
(800) 548-8252
www.lungusa.org/tobacco

American Diabetes Association
1701 N Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
(800) 342-2383
www.diabetes.org

HEALTHY INITIATIVES

TML IEBP Medical Management, PO Box 141039, Austin, Texas 78714-1039
(512) 719-6571 (800) 847-1213 Fax: (512) 719-6587