

Press Release:  
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## Five Facts About Diabetes

It is often difficult to separate fact from fiction with so much information available for the 24 million Americans living with diabetes, says Debbie Lay RN, Illinois Diabetes Prevention and Control program at the Fayette County Health Department. The National Diabetes Education Program provides five facts about diabetes to help people with diabetes better understand how to manage the disease.

**Fact #1: Diabetes is a serious disease. It can lead to serious complications such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, and lower limb amputations.** Good diabetes care includes managing the ABC's of diabetes- as measured by the A1C test, blood pressure, and cholesterol- to help avoid having a heart attack, stroke, or other problems.

**Fact #2: The only way to know for sure what your levels are is to check you blood glucose.** Diabetes is often called a "silent disease" because it can cause serious complications even before you have symptoms. Set your blood glucose targets with your diabetes care team.

**Fact #3: Small amounts of foods that contain sugar can be part of a healthy meal plan.** If you choose to eat sweet foods, just have a small amount at the end of a healthy meal, not every day, or have a piece of fruit rather than a sugary snack.

**Fact #4: A healthy meal plan for people with diabetes is a healthy meal plan for everyone. Eat foods that are high in fiber and low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt(sodium) and added sugars.** Healthy foods include a colorful mix of fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, dry peas or beans, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese. Ask your health care team for a healthy meal plan.

**Fact #5: Physical activity is safe- and essential- for people with diabetes.** Start by setting small goals until you reach at least 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a good way to move more. Physical activity can help people improve their blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure and weight. It also helps improve strength, flexibility, and balance. Talk to your health care provider about ways to safely increase your daily physical activity.

For more information about diabetes contact Debbie Lay at the health department at 283-1044 or visit the web site at [www.fayettehealthdept.org](http://www.fayettehealthdept.org)