

DIABETES, KNOW YOUR ABC'S

If you have diabetes, you are at high risk for heart attack and stroke. *But you can fight back.* You can control the ABC's of diabetes and live a long and healthy life. Ask your health care provider what your **A1C**, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol numbers are and ask what they *should* be. Then talk about the steps you can take to reach your ABC goals. You have the power to help prevent heart attack and stroke. Debbie Lay RN from the Illinois Diabetes Prevention and Control program at the Fayette County Health Department urges people with diabetes and pre-diabetes to know their numbers, set goals to reach targets for a long and healthy life.

Take control now of the ABC's of diabetes. The A1C test is a blood test that checks for hemoglobin A1C which measures your average blood glucose over the last 3 months. The target should be less than 7%. Diagnosis of diabetes can be made with an A1C of $\geq 6.5\%$. Reducing your A1C by just one percent may greatly reduce your risk of diabetes complications. For example, decreasing your A1C from 8% to 7% may reduce the risk of eye, kidney and nerve damage 37%. The second letter B stands for blood pressure. Blood pressure measures two numbers. The top number measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom number measures the pressure while your heart rests between beats. Normal blood pressure is below 120/80. High blood pressure mainly adds to the workload of your heart and arteries causing the heart to work harder over a long time, it tends to enlarge the heart. As you grow older, your arteries will harden and become less elastic and having high blood pressure tends to speed up this process. High blood pressure increases your risk of stroke. It can damage your kidneys and eyes. The C represents cholesterol numbers. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the human body that is necessary for all cells to function. However, several types of cholesterol, as well as too much cholesterol in the blood, can lead to heart disease. How do your numbers compare? Desired total cholesterol should be less than 200. Desired HDL (Good Cholesterol) should be 60 and above. Optimal LDL (Bad cholesterol) should be less than 100. Normal Triglycerides should be less than 150.

Debbie Lay RN says it is important to have annual and recommended testing of the ABC's, eat healthy, be active, manage stress and stop smoking. For more information on the ABC's and reaching your target numbers for diabetes, cholesterol or blood pressure contact the health department at 618-283-1044 or visit the web at www.fayettehealthdept.org.