

## Don't smoke!

- + Nicotine narrows your blood vessels, making blood flow problems worse.
- + First Choice will pay for medicines to help you quit smoking. Just ask your doctor.

## Have your eyes checked every year.

- + The eye doctor has to dilate your eyes to look inside them for problems.
- + Have your vision checked every year, ***even if your vision is fine!***

## Protect your feet.

- + Always wear comfortable socks and shoes.
- + Check your feet every day. You may not feel a problem, so you must actually look at your feet. Use a mirror if you need.
- + See your doctor right away if you find a problem. Do not try to treat it yourself.

## Check your kidneys.

- + Make sure to have your doctor check your kidneys every year. This is usually done with a simple urine test.

- + Your doctor may give you medicine (ACE or ARB) to take every day to protect your kidneys.

## Take your medicine every day.

- + You may be on medicine for more than blood sugar. You may need medicine for your blood pressure or cholesterol, kidneys or other problems. The medicine only works if you take it the way the doctor ordered.
- + If you have questions about your medicines, talk to your doctor or call one of our nurses at 888.559.1010.

## Living with diabetes is hard.

*At First Choice we want to help you keep your diabetes in control.*

**If you have any questions about your diabetes or would like to talk with one of our nurses, please call 888.559.1010.**

*In control*

**FirstChoice**  
by Select Health of South Carolina  
*Your Hometown Health Plan*



South Carolina  
**HealthyConnections**

# POWER overdiabetes



**Diabetes Problems:  
What they are and how  
you can prevent them.**

## Diabetes affects almost every part of your body.

*If your blood sugar is high, your blood vessels and nerves may be damaged. Over time, that damage leads to problems with blood flow (circulation) and sensation (neuropathy).*

**Heart Disease:** People with diabetes are much more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. That is because the blood vessels of the heart or brain are narrower and get blocked with fatty deposits (plaque) or a clot more easily.

**Eye Problems:** Your eyes have a lot of very small blood vessels that keep your eyes healthy and allow you to see. When these vessels get damaged, you can have serious problems like retinopathy, glaucoma or cataracts. Sometimes it even causes blindness.

**Kidney Disease:** You may not realize that your kidneys have millions of little blood vessels that help to filter your blood. If these vessels get damaged from high blood sugar, your kidneys can't work as well. Some people have such bad kidney problems they need dialysis or a transplant.

**Feet Problems:** People with diabetes often have problems with their feet. High blood sugar can damage the nerves in their feet. This means they lose feeling in their feet. They can't feel when they have a blister or sore. Blisters and sores can get really bad before the person knows there is a problem. When they don't have good blood flow (circulation), they have a hard time healing. Sometimes, the wounds get infected and their toe, foot or leg has to be amputated to save their life.



**These problems sound scary, but they don't have to be.**

*If you take care of yourself now, you can keep a lot of these problems from happening.*

## What you should do now:

### Control your blood sugar.

- + Work with your doctor to get your blood sugar under control.
- + Try to keep your Hemoglobin A1c less than 7. This test shows your blood sugar levels over the last 3 months.

### Control your blood pressure.

- + High blood pressure puts an extra strain on your heart and blood vessels.
- + Work with your doctor to keep your blood pressure less than 130/80.



### Control your cholesterol (lipids).

- + Too much cholesterol (lipids or fat) in your blood can cause fatty deposits (plaques) that can block blood vessels.
- + Work with your doctor to keep your LDL (bad cholesterol) less than 100. You may have to take medicine for this.

