

Diabetes is a group of diseases characterized by high blood glucose levels. Our bodies break down most food into glucose, and then use it to fuel our systems. In order for the glucose to get into our cells, the body needs insulin. In people with diabetes, their pancreas either produces little to no insulin, or the cells do not respond appropriately to insulin. There are 3 different types of diabetes:

Type 1: the body does not produce insulin. Insulin is a hormone the body needs to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. When the pancreas stops producing insulin, the glucose can't enter into the cells. The body then looks for another energy source so it starts to break down muscle tissue and fat. Type 1 diabetes, previously known as juvenile diabetes, is diagnosed most commonly in children and young adults. Only 5 percent of people with diabetes have type 1.

Type 2: the most common form of diabetes, occurs when the body does not use insulin properly. This is called insulin resistance. At first, the pancreas makes extra insulin to make up for it. But over time the pancreas can't keep up and can't make enough insulin to keep the individual's blood glucose at normal levels.

Gestational: occurs during pregnancy. Gestational diabetes starts when the body can't make and use all the insulin it needs for pregnancy. Generally, women with gestational diabetes often show no symptoms.

Source:

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/type-1/> (Accessed 8/5/14)

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/type-2/> (Accessed 8/5/14)

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/gestational/> (Accessed 8/5/14)

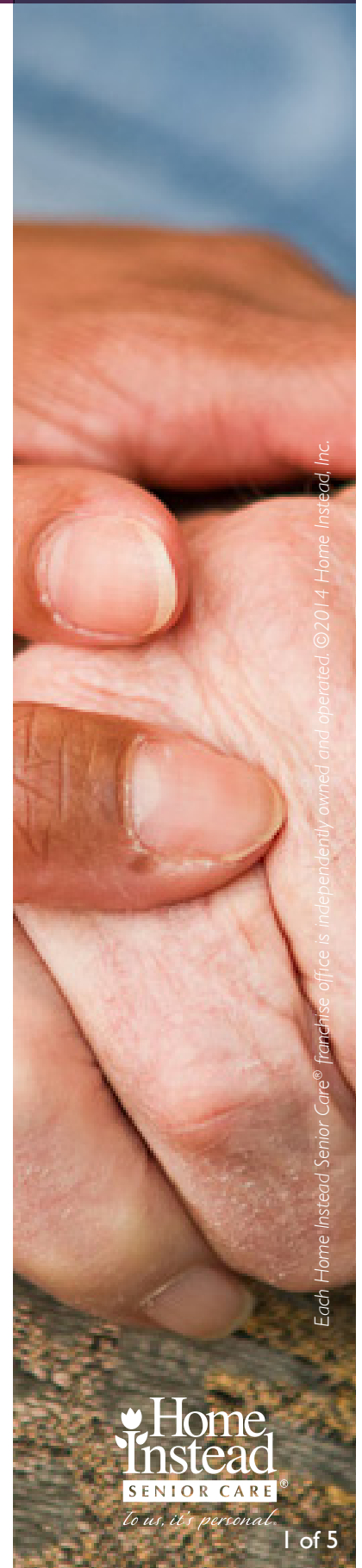
Common Symptoms of Diabetes

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes have several common symptoms which may include:

- Frequent urination
- Unusual thirst
- Unusual weight loss, which is usually more noticeable with type 1 diabetes
- Extreme hunger – Glucose-starved cells may also signal the body for more food thus increasing your appetite
- Extreme fatigue and irritability

Type 2 diabetes sometimes has other less-common symptoms which may include:

- Frequent infections, blurred vision, cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- Recurring skin, gum or bladder infections
- Tingling and numbness in the hands or feet. Type 2 diabetes has a gradual onset and people are often not aware they have it. Nerve damage can happen for years before diagnosis



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Complications of Diabetes

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia develops when there is not enough glucose (sugar that is used as fuel for cells) in the body. Hypoglycemia can also be called an insulin reaction or insulin shock. Symptoms of hypoglycemia provide clues that a client may have low blood glucose levels. Each person's reaction to hypoglycemia is different, so it's important to be aware of the signs and symptoms indicating your client's blood glucose is low. The only sure way to know if a client is experiencing hypoglycemia, is for the client to check her blood glucose.

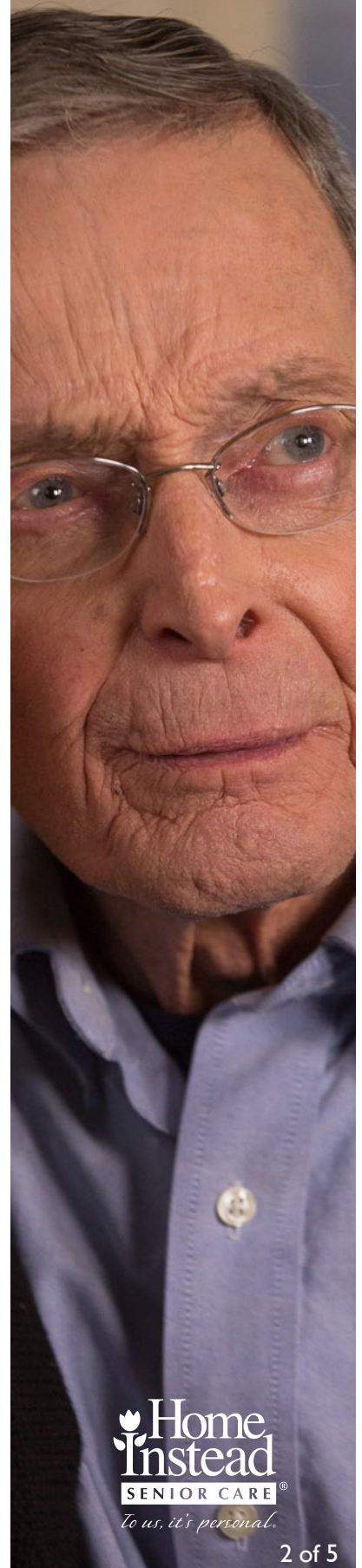
Some common signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia may include:

- Shakiness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Sweating, chills and clamminess
- Irritability or impatience
- Confusion
- Rapid/fast heartbeat
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Hunger and nausea
- Sleepiness
- Blurred/impaired vision
- Tingling or numbness in the lips or tongue
- Headaches
- Weakness or fatigue
- Anger, stubbornness or sadness
- Lack of coordination
- Nightmares or crying out during sleep
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

If not treated as soon as possible hypoglycemia may cause seizures or unconsciousness, and in some cases may lead to death. Often, a person with diabetes may recognize she has low blood glucose, and will follow a process to remedy it. If the client is experiencing one or more of these symptoms or if her symptoms have worsened, call the franchise office immediately.

Sources:

<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/hypoglycemia-low-blood.html>
(Accessed 8/5/14)



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Hyperglycemia

Hyperglycemia is high blood sugar (glucose). High blood sugar occurs when the body does not have enough insulin or when the body can't use insulin properly.

Some possible signs and symptoms may include the following:

- Thirst
- Blurry vision
- Fatigue
- Frequent urination
- Weight loss

If the client is experiencing one or more of these symptoms, call the franchise office immediately.

Source:

<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/hyperglycemia.html> (Accessed 8/5/14)

Other Complications of Diabetes

Generally, people with diabetes are at an increased risk of developing serious health problems which may include:

- **Eye complications** - which generally occur as disorders of the retina and may include a higher risk of blindness.
- **Hearing loss**
- **Foot problems** - nerve damage, called neuropathy, which may cause pain, but can also lessen the ability to feel pain, heat and cold resulting in foot injuries.
- **Poor circulation very dry skin, calluses and ulcers on the feet.** - if neglected, ulcers can result in infections, which may require amputation in some cases.
- **Infections** - People with diabetes should be very careful when trimming or clipping their toe nails. Because of the nerve damage, the client may not feel pain. The higher level of glucose in the bloodstream can make clients with diabetes more likely to get infections. Remember, CAREGivers are not allowed to trim or clip their clients toe nails with or without diabetes.
- **High blood pressure** - This may increase the risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease.
- **High blood sugar** can also overwork the kidneys, possibly leading to kidney failure. Once the kidneys stop working properly, replacement therapy via dialysis or transplant is necessary.
- **Nerve damage such as autonomic neuropathy**, which may affect the nerves of the digestive system, urinary tract and heart and blood vessels.

With correct treatment and recommended lifestyle changes, many people with diabetes are able to prevent or delay the onset of complications. It is important for clients with diabetes to manage diabetes carefully to prevent problems in the first place.

Source: <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/> (Accessed 8/5/14)

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Treatment for Diabetes

People with diabetes may be treated with medication or insulin. There are two common ways to take insulin: shots and insulin pumps.

Eating right can be an effective way to help manage diabetes, as it can make a significant difference in controlling the blood sugar level. As a CAREGiver, it is important to encourage the client to follow the recommended diet from the client's physician.

Exercise can be beneficial for clients with diabetes. Encourage your client to follow the recommended exercise routine prescribed by her physician. You can offer assistance by reminding her to protect her feet. Make sure her shoes fit well and are tied. After exercising, check the feet for blisters, cuts, bumps, redness or other sores. If present, call the franchise office immediately.

Watch the client while she exercises and for a few hours after. If the client is shaking, anxious, confused or weak or she is sweating more than usual, her blood sugar may be low or dropping. Call the franchise office immediately.

The client may have a process for when her blood sugar is low. She may have glucose tablets, a small carton of fruit juice or a few pieces of hard candy. Make sure whatever she uses in these situations is on hand and easy to retrieve for the client.

Role of a CAREGiver

A CAREGiver plays an important role when working with a client with diabetes. As a CAREGiver, you must be prepared to deal with emotional situations. For instance, a client with diabetes may experience fears, anxiety or depression.

Here is a list of things to try to help the client with diabetes:

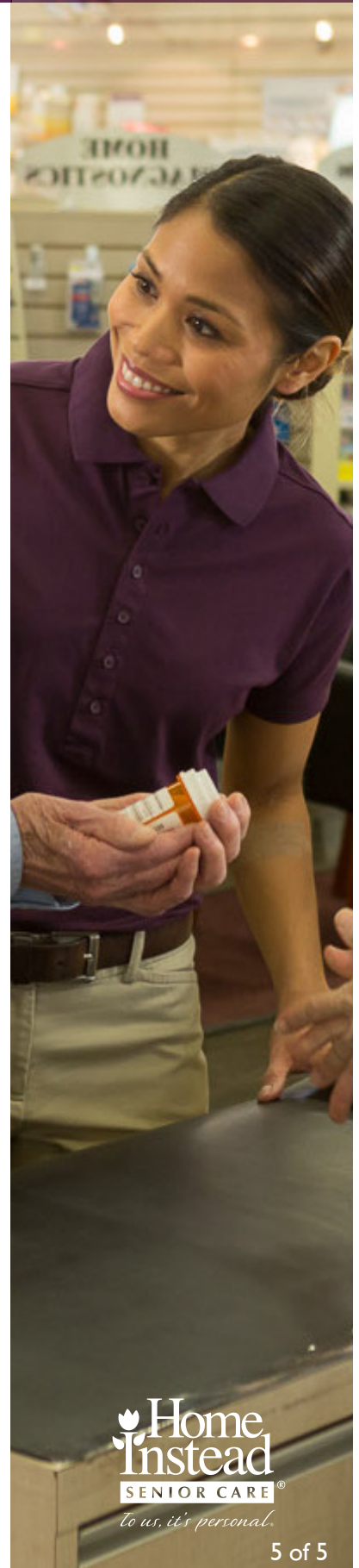
- Prompt the client to check blood sugar levels at regularly scheduled times.
- Remind the client to take the necessary medications.
- Help the client schedule the different medical appointments, and make sure there is transportation to and from the appointments.
- Document signs and symptoms or other concerns for the client to discuss with her doctor. A change in a person's mood or temperament may indicate that her blood glucose level is too high or too low.
- Know the action plan in case of a diabetic emergency or complications.
- Plan and prepare a well-balanced diet.



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- If the client is experiencing foot problems, make sure the environment is safe. For example:
 - In cold weather, assist the client with putting shoes and socks on to stay warm.
 - Remove clutter in pathways. A client may not feel pain after stepping on something sharp.
- If the client is testing her blood sugar levels, record all of the information in the Client Journal. Follow the client's physician's instructions if the levels are too high or low.
- Routinely ask the client if she is feeling "OK" to prevent potential emergencies.
- Maintain regular communication with the franchise office and write thorough notes in the Client Journal.




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