



Smoking

A danger for people with diabetes

Smoking is very dangerous to health, especially for people with diabetes.

Parents of children with diabetes should take a firm stand on smoking to prevent their children from ever starting. Many tobacco ads are targeted at young people. About 3,000 children in our country start to use tobacco every day – an alarming number!

If it is not well-controlled, diabetes may damage the blood vessels. This damage increases the risk of eye and kidney disease, heart attacks, strokes, and impaired blood flow to the feet, which may lead to amputations. Since smoking also damages blood vessels, people with diabetes who smoke are at greater risk for these serious diabetes complications.

Studies have shown that both eye disease (*retinopathy*) and kidney disease (*nephropathy*) are more common and more severe in people with diabetes who smoke than in those who do not. A study at the University of Washington found that poor blood flow to the fingers and toes, to the degree that often requires amputation, occurred only in people with diabetes who smoked. In addition to these risks, people with diabetes are also at greater risk for the other well-known toxic effects of smoking, including lung diseases (emphysema and chronic bronchitis), lung cancer, and high blood pressure.

Many health risks of smoking decrease rapidly after quitting, so it is never too late to quit. If you smoke, your health care team can work with you to develop a program to help you to quit. Not smoking will lessen your chances of developing dangerous complications of diabetes.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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