

# Supervisor's Guide to Diabetes

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## What Is Diabetes?

Normally, the body converts dietary sugars and starches into a form of sugar called glucose, which it can burn for heat and energy. With diabetes, the storage and use of glucose are significantly impaired. The trouble lies with insulin, the hormone that converts glucose into energy. The high levels of glucose in the blood can severely damage many organs, including the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

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|----------------|---|
| Risk Factors:  | obesity, age 40+, family history  |
| Reducing Risk: | staying trim, physical activity   |
| Symptoms:      | (a) frequent urination, excessive thirst, weight loss<br>(b) numbness in or sores on legs and feet, blurred vision<br>(c) unexplained fatigue |

## Why Can Teaching Our Staff About Diabetes Benefit Our Company?

Because they will—

- Have more energy to cope with deadlines
- Have greater concentration on job tasks
- Reduce the chance of serious on-the-job injuries
- Demonstrate greater productivity with less absenteeism
- Reduce unnecessary health care costs

## How Will This Information Benefit My Employees?

They will—

- Feel better
- Reduce their stress and tension through positive actions
- Enjoy their job more because they are taking time for themselves throughout the day
- Experience more satisfaction on the job and less turnover

## Healthy Lifestyle and Diabetes Education At the Work Site

Here are some suggestions for incorporating healthy lifestyle and diabetes education into your work site. For additional resources and assistance in implementing these programs contact the National Diabetes Education Program ([www.nih.ndep.gov](http://www.nih.ndep.gov)) and the American Diabetes Association ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)).

**Goal:** Promote awareness of diabetes

**Activities:**

1. Print diabetes article in company newsletter (quarterly).
2. Display posters of flyers highlighting risks associated with diabetes (semi-annually).

**Goal:** Provide health screening to identify risks for diabetes

**Objectives:**

1. Provide blood pressure screening (annually).
2. Provide vision screening and foot check (annually).
3. Provide glucose screening (annually).
4. Provide A1C screening (quarterly).

**Goal:** Provide support and educational opportunities

**Activities:**

1. Offer fruit, tea, or juices in place of doughnuts, muffins and coffee during meetings (daily).
2. Incorporate stretching breaks into your meetings (daily).
3. Lead staff through three deep breaths at the end of each meeting.
4. Ensure that vending machines and cafeterias offer low-fat, healthy choices (monthly).
5. Encourage a walking program among employees (weekly).
6. Promote a health screening and ongoing wellness support programs.
7. Remind employees to take medication and/or insulin shots and to monitor blood glucose regularly. Encourage regular checkups with doctor.
8. Contact your Local Chapter of the American Diabetes Association (800) 232-3472