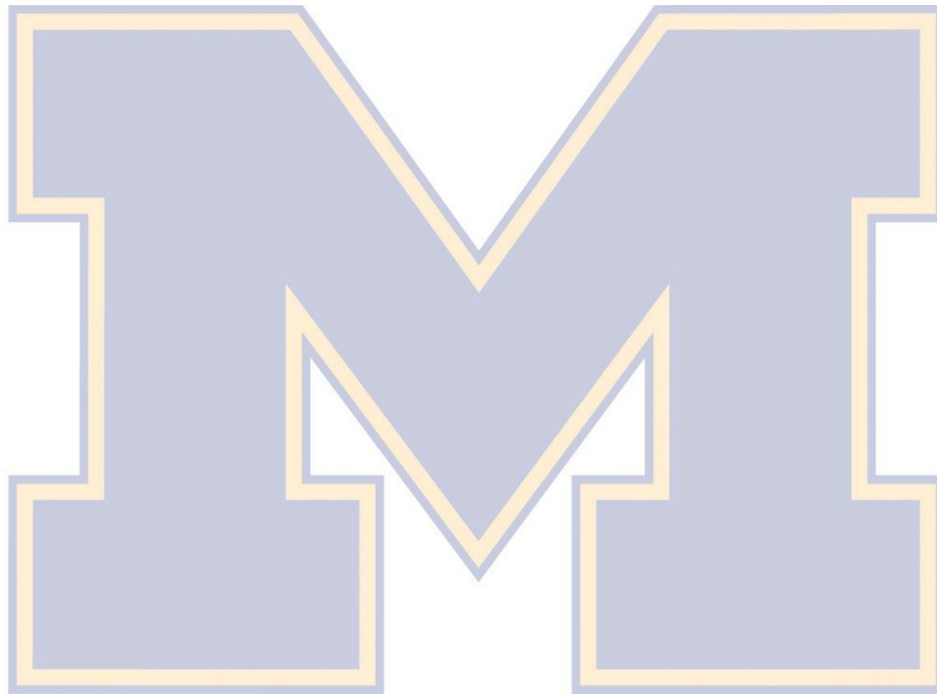


Newsletter #2



What You Don't Know About Diabetes Can Hurt You

You do a lot to care for your diabetes each and every day. Although your doctor and other members of your health care team can work with you to make a treatment plan, you are the one who carries it out. You have a lot of choices to make as you go through the day – what you will eat, if and when you will exercise and how to use the results from checking your blood sugar. Learning all you can about diabetes helps you to make wise decisions and informed choices.

Here are just three of the many ways learning about diabetes can help make managing diabetes easier for you.

Safety. Many people with diabetes make daily and sometimes emergency self-care decisions. You need to know how to recognize, treat, and prevent low and high blood sugars, and what to do when you are ill. You need to know how to choose food, exercise safely, check your blood sugar, care for your feet, and safely take medicines. Learning about diabetes also helps you keep all of these things balanced and teaches you what to do when they are out of balance.

Motivation. Sometimes people avoid learning about diabetes because it makes it easier to believe that their diabetes is not serious. But, ignorance is not bliss when it comes to diabetes. You need to take your diabetes seriously. Learning about diabetes gives you the knowledge and skills to care for your diabetes. It helps you decide what is important to you (the will) and feel more in charge and confident (the power), so you have the willpower to do what you want and need to do.

Team care. Taking care of your diabetes is a team effort. In addition to yourself, your health care team may include your family, doctors, nurses, dietitians, diabetes educators, pharmacists, psychologists, ophthalmologists (eye doctors), social workers, foot and exercise specialists, and others. The providers on your health care team have the knowledge and skills needed to treat diabetes. However, **you** are the key member of your team. No one knows you and your diabetes and as well as you do. Learning about diabetes and what works in your own life helps you to be an effective partner with your health care team.

One of the facts about living with diabetes is that much of the care is in your hands – your doctor or nurse cannot manage it for you. The decisions you make each day affect your future health and well-being. Learning all you can helps you to go from **being** in charge to **taking** charge of your diabetes.

Ask your doctor, nurse, or dietitian the following questions:

1. Is there a diabetes self-management education program in this area that I can attend?
2. Is there a diabetes support program in this area that I can attend?
3. Are there trust-worthy on-line or other resources to learn about diabetes or get the support I need?