

Caring for Diabetic Parents

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What is Diabetes?

When we eat food containing carbohydrates e.g. rice, posho, cassava, the body breaks them into what scientists call sugars or glucose. The body gets energy from these sugars to do all kinds of work. Without energy you can die.

However, when these sugars or glucose become excess in the body they damage organs such as eyes, kidneys, heart, and a person becomes sick. So, the body has to control the levels of sugars.

Diabetes is a disease caused when the body fails to control the excess sugars or glucose levels in it.

What Causes Diabetes

Diabetes is commonly caused by two things:

Not Enough / No Insulin

In the body, there is an organ called the **pancreas**. This pancreas also produces a substance called **insulin**. It removes sugars from the body. This insulin is released when there is excess sugars in the body and it is blocked when the body needs more sugars to get energy.

When the pancreas does not produce insulin, excess sugars remain in body circulation and therefore cause diabetes.

The pancreas may at some point in life fail to produce enough insulin. This condition happens to some people. It is commonly inherited from their parents or got from other diseases.

Body Resists Insulin

Here, the pancreas produces insulin but it does not get where it's supposed to be because of factors such as excess body fat or obesity. Too much fat is one of reasons why insulin may fail to work.

Therefore, excess sugars remain in the body and cause diabetes

Common Symptoms of Diabetes

Here are the commonest symptoms for diabetes. However, to confirm that you have diabetes you have to take a test from the hospital because some symptoms could mean a different problem

1

Feeling more thirsty than usual

2

Feeling need to urinate more often than normal

3

Always feeling more tired than usual

4

Starting to have blurry eyesight

5

Getting wounds that take longer to heal

How to Prevent Diabetes

Preventing or delaying diabetes requires adopting healthy lifestyle habits that promote overall well-being right from childhood. Here are some of them:

1

Encourage Healthy Eating Habits: Provide a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Limit sugary snacks, processed foods and beverages.



2

Promote Regular Physical Activity: Encourage children to engage in regular physical activity, such as playing sports, riding bikes, or going for walks. Aim for at least an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.



3

Maintain a Healthy Weight: Help children achieve and maintain a healthy weight for their age by promoting balanced nutrition and regular physical activity.



4

Encourage Sleep: Ensure children get adequate sleep each night, as poor sleep habits are linked to an increased risk of developing diabetes.



5

Monitor Blood Sugar Levels: If you have family members with diabetes history of diabetes or other risk factors, consider monitoring blood sugar levels regularly. Early detection and intervention can help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes.



6

Educate About Diabetes Risk Factors: Teach children about the risk factors for diabetes, including family history, lifestyle choices, and environmental factors. Empower them to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.



7

Regular Health Check-ups: Schedule regular health check-ups with a doctor to monitor growth, development, and overall health. Discuss any concerns or risk factors for diabetes during these visits.



8

Model Healthy Behaviors By Parents: Be a positive role model by demonstrating healthy eating habits, regular physical activity, and stress management techniques. Children are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors when they see them practiced by their parents.



Caring for Our Diabetic Parents

Caring for diabetic parents can be a loving and supportive journey that requires patience, understanding, and a commitment to their well-being. Here are some tips for caring for diabetic parents:

Educate Yourself

Learn as much as you can about diabetes, including how it affects the body, common symptoms, and treatment. Understanding your parent's condition will help you provide better care and support.

Encourage Healthy Habits

Help your parent maintain a healthy lifestyle by encouraging regular exercise, eating right and monitoring their blood sugar levels. Offer to exercise together and provide emotional support.

Monitor Medications

Make sure your parent follows their medications as prescribed and their treatment program. Help them keep track of their medications and check-up schedule with their doctor because sometimes being sick makes them forget or become sloppy.

Avoid Stressing Them

Stress can affect blood sugar levels, so help your parent control stress. Do not be the reason for them to get angry. Do what you are told to do fast before they have to yell at you.

Be Patient and Compassionate

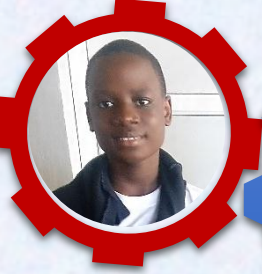
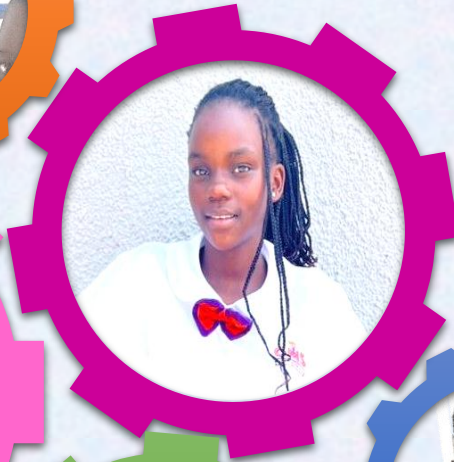
Living with diabetes can be challenging, and your parent may experience frustration, fear, or anxiety at times. Be patient, listen to their concerns, and offer reassurance and encouragement.

Plan for Emergencies

Be prepared for emergencies by keeping emergency contacts and a list of medications readily available. Learn the signs of low and high blood sugar and know when to seek medical help.



Caring for diabetic parents requires dedication, compassion, and teamwork. By working together and providing support in both practical and emotional ways, you can help your parent live a fulfilling and healthy life despite their diabetes.



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