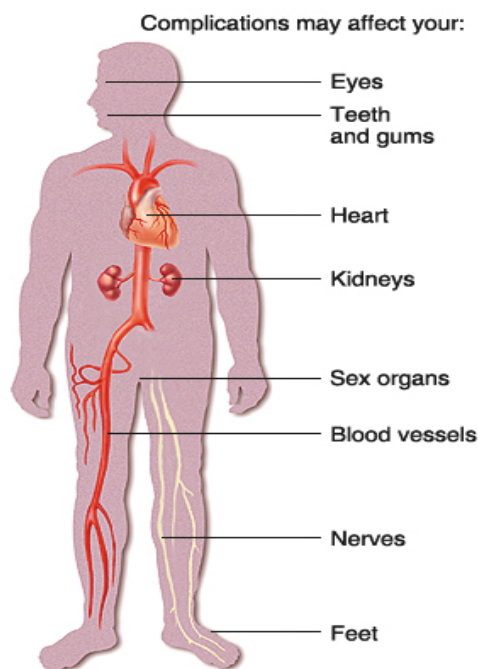


Long-Term Complications of Diabetes

Diabetes can cause health problems over time. These are called complications. They are more likely to occur if your blood sugar is often too high. Over time, high blood sugar can damage blood vessels in your body. It is important to keep your blood sugar in your target range. This can help prevent or delay complications from diabetes.



Possible complications

Complications of diabetes include:

- Eye problems, including damage to the blood vessels in the eyes (retinopathy), pressure in the eye (glaucoma), and clouding of the eye's lens (a cataract). Eye problems can eventually lead to irreversible blindness.
- Tooth and gum problems (periodontal disease), causing loss of teeth and bone
- Blood vessel (vascular) disease leading to circulation problems, heart attack or stroke, or a need for amputation of a limb
- Problems with sexual function leading to erectile dysfunction in men and sexual discomfort in women
- Kidney disease (nephropathy) can eventually lead to kidney failure, which may require dialysis or kidney transplant
- Nerve problems (neuropathy), causing pain or loss of feeling in your feet and other parts of your body, potentially leading to an amputation of a limb
- High blood pressure (hypertension), putting strain on your heart and blood vessels
- Serious infections, possibly leading to loss of toes, feet, or limbs

How to avoid complications

The serious consequences of these complications are completely avoidable for most people with diabetes by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. This can help you feel better and stay healthy. You can manage diabetes by tracking your blood sugar. You can also eat healthy and exercise. And you should take medication if directed by your health care provider.