

Helpful Tips for Those Living with Diabetes

It's not easy finding out that you or a loved one has diabetes. However, educating yourself about this disease is the first step toward feeling better and living a longer and healthier life.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), nearly 26 million children and adults in America are living with diabetes. November is American Diabetes Month and OAOHN would like to take this opportunity to provide some helpful tips.

The ADA offers the following suggestions to help navigate treatment if you or a loved one has been diagnosed:

- **Create a healthcare team.** Finding the right team of skilled health professionals will help you manage your diabetes and get the most out of your care. Ask your doctor to help you build a team to assist you in reaching your goals and feeling better.
- **Be the star player on your team.** Self care is the best way to maintain your good health. You can help keep yourself well by eating right, staying active, taking your medicine, monitoring your blood glucose and making and keeping doctor appointments.
- **Keep a close eye on your blood glucose levels.** Your doctor may want you to start checking your glucose (or blood sugar) levels at home. If so, you will need a small machine called a blood glucose meter. Your healthcare team can help you find the best meter for your needs. Keeping your blood glucose levels in a healthy range is key in controlling your diabetes.
- **Take your prescribed medications.** To help keep your blood glucose in the target range, it's vital that you take your medications as prescribed by your doctor. If you believe you're having side effects, be sure to call your doctor or pharmacist.

As you know, developing and maintaining a relationship with a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. A PCP typically specializes in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or General Practice. If you don't have a PCP, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.

When you're being treated for a disease or condition, it may not always be easy to decide where to go for care. For anything that is considered a life-threatening situation (like chest pain, major injuries or sudden and severe pain) it's best to go to the emergency room.

For less severe matters that still require immediate attention, if you can't get in to see your PCP, going to an urgent care facility can save you time and money.

Even if you require emergency or urgent care for your health situation, it's always best to have a relationship with a PCP who knows your history and understands what is happening with your health over time.