

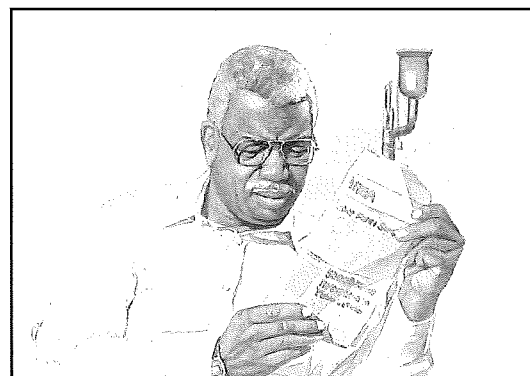
Long-Term Complications of Diabetes

High blood sugar can cause serious health problems. Many times the damage occurs without your knowing anything is wrong. A 10-year national study showed that controlling blood sugar greatly reduces the risk of complications. Working with your healthcare team to keep your blood sugar within your target range can help you avoid the following problems.

Eyes

High blood sugar increases your risk for eye diseases.

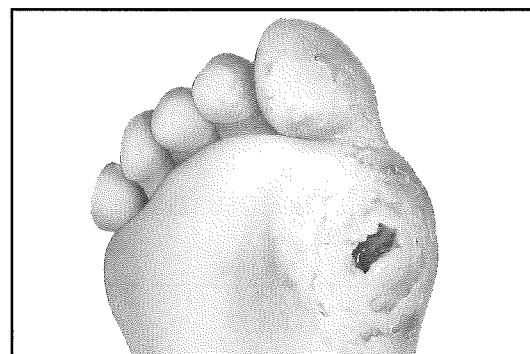
- **Diabetic retinopathy** occurs when blood vessels inside the eye weaken. This leads to blurry, distorted vision and even blindness.
- **Glaucoma** is an increase in pressure inside the eye. This can cause loss of side vision.
- **Cataracts** are a clouding of the lens in the eye. This causes blurry, dull vision.



Feet

High blood sugar increases your risk for foot problems.

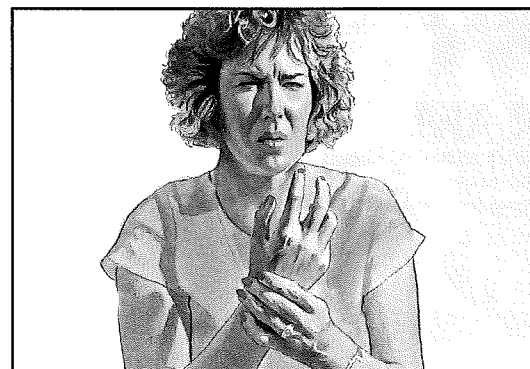
- **Poor blood flow** (circulation) can keep sores from healing. This can lead to infection and even loss of toes or a foot.
- **Damaged nerves** can make it hard to feel pain, pressure, heat, or cold in the feet. Then you may not notice a foot problem until it's too late.



Nerves

High blood sugar can destroy nerves (neuropathy).

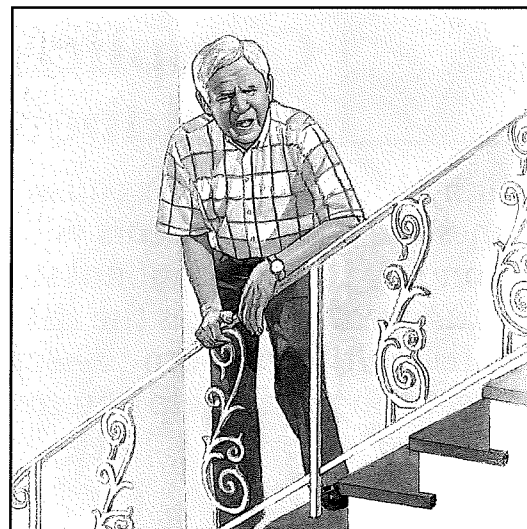
- **Damage to sensory nerves** can cause pain, tingling, numbness, or burning in the hands, wrists, face, or thighs, as well as in the feet.
- **Damage to involuntary nerves** can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, or trouble emptying your bladder. Men may have trouble getting an erection.



Blood Vessels

High blood sugar can damage blood vessels. So can high blood pressure. This can slow or stop blood flow.

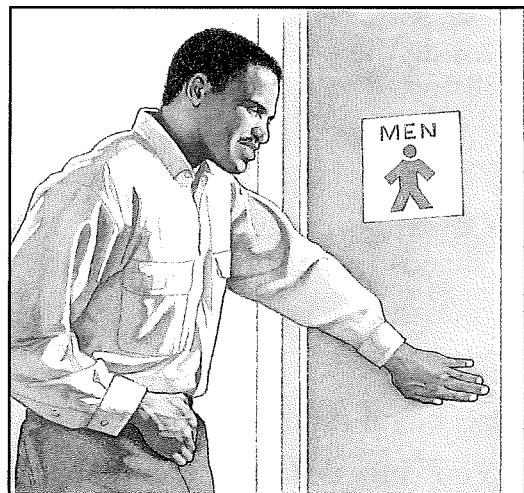
- **Blood vessel disease** (peripheral vascular disease) occurs when blood flow to the arms, legs, or feet is blocked. You may feel weakness, pain, or cramping when you stand or move.
- **Angina or heart attack** occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked. You may feel pressure, tightness, aching or pain in your chest, jaw, neck, back, or arm.
- **Stroke** occurs when blood flow to the brain is blocked, or when a blood vessel in the brain tears.



Kidneys

High blood sugar can cause bladder infections. It can also damage small blood vessels in the kidneys. Then the body has trouble getting rid of waste products.

- **Urinary tract infections** occur because bacteria in the bladder feed on high blood sugar. You may feel a need to urinate often and have pain when you urinate.
- **Kidney damage** (nephropathy) causes protein to spill into the urine. It can also cause waste products to build up in the blood. These can lead to tiredness, loss of appetite, swelling in the hands and feet, skin problems, and confusion.



Special Instructions:
