

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## **PROBLEMS THAT CAN HAPPEN OVER TIME**

Keeping your blood sugar as close to normal as possible can prevent or delay the problems of diabetes.

Diabetes can affect any part of your body. The main problems seem to occur in eyes, kidneys, heart, feet, and nerves.

### **Eyes**

High blood sugars can lead to vision loss. You may not even have symptoms so it is important to see an eye doctor every year for a dilated eye exam.

If you have any changes in your vision, see your doctor immediately.

### **Kidney**

High blood sugars and high blood pressure may eventually lead to kidney problems and dialysis. It is important to control your blood sugar and blood pressure. See your doctor at least once a year and have your urine checked for protein. (Protein in the urine is an early sign of kidney trouble.) If problems with kidneys are found early, they can be treated. 1

## **Heart**

People with diabetes are more likely to develop heart disease and strokes. It is important to control blood sugar, blood pressure, the fats (cholesterol) in your blood, and to stop smoking. As your risk factors increase, the chances of heart attack and stroke increase.

## **Feet**

High blood sugars can lead to poor blood flow and nerve damage. This can lead to slow healing of sores. You can experience severe pain, but you can also lose feeling in your feet. In serious cases this may lead to amputation of your toes, foot or leg. See Chapter 7 for proper foot care.

## **Nerves**

High blood sugars can affect **all** of the nerve endings in your body. Nerve damage can cause many problems. Some examples could be problems with sex, numbness or tingling in your hands and feet, and experiencing constipation or diarrhea.

**The best way to prevent these problems is to control your blood sugar and take good care of yourself.**

# YOUR NOTES