It’s not a sweet deal, diabetes. Having high blood sugar can lead to an assortment of health problems. That includes cardiovascular effects. People with diabetes have an increased risk of developing heart disease.

Do you have high blood sugar? You can take steps now to help prevent or slow the risk for diabetes-related complications. Just follow these ABCs.

**Ace Your A1c**
If you have diabetes, a hemoglobin A1c test can tell you how well you’ve managed your blood sugar during the last three months. It’s smart to have an A1c test at least twice a year. For most adults with diabetes, the goal is an A1c of less than 7 percent.

**Bring Down Blood Pressure**
Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure. Blood pressure that’s too high makes your heart work overtime. That can lead to heart disease and stroke. Aim to keep your blood pressure less than 130/80 mm Hg.

**Cut Your Cholesterol**
Controlling artery-clogging cholesterol can reduce potential complications from diabetes. The most important cholesterol target is your low-density lipoprotein, or LDL. To keep your heart risks in check, your LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/dL.

More Tips to Decrease Your Risks
Beyond the ABCs, you should:

- **Drop excess pounds and maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Exercise regularly.** Aim for 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.
- **Fit in fiber-rich foods,** such as fruits, veggies and whole grains.
- **Get in the habit of using your glucose meter.** Make sure that you use the test strips that are recommended for your particular meter.

**lunch & learn: what can I eat?**
June 15 (Norfolk)  
September 17 (Kearney)
Learn how foods affect your blood sugar. You’ll be empowered to make healthy diet choices and reach your target blood sugar ranges! Register online at BlueHealthAdvantageNE.com or call 877-348-4329.
3 Drug-Free Ways to Lower Cholesterol

If you have high cholesterol, these changes can improve your heart health—without statins or other drugs.

1. **Change your weight.** If you’re heavy, shed pounds to reduce your LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol. A large waist may further increase your heart risk.

2. **Change your diet.** Eat only enough calories to reach or maintain a healthy weight. Also, avoid harmful foods and add more healthy options.

   - Avoid:
     - Saturated fat from animal foods
     - Cholesterol itself, which is abundant in egg yolks
     - Trans fats, in fried and processed foods and baked goods

   - Choose more:
     - Fruits and vegetables
     - Whole grains and fiber
     - Pistachios and other nuts

3. **Change your workout.** Regular exercise lowers your bad cholesterol and boosts your HDL, or “good,” cholesterol. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week.

   - Make healthy food choices!

**do you know what high cholesterol is?**


---

**Stay Hydrated in Hot Weather**

Dehydration affects your body. That includes your blood glucose levels. If you have diabetes, you can experience heat illness. If this happens, the body’s cooling system shuts down.

Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink. Instead, carry a water bottle with you. Drink often. Up your intake before, during and after physical activity.
Cut Calories from Your Cookout

Planning a BBQ? Grilling is already a low-fat way to cook. Make the most of your meal with these 10 tips.

Building Your Burger
1. Use 95 percent lean hamburger meat.
2. Limit patties to ¼ pound or less.
3. Try low-fat turkey burgers. Or make veggie burgers using beans and grains or textured soy.
4. Serve burgers on whole-grain buns instead of white.
5. Hold the mayo and skip the cheese, unless it’s low-fat or nonfat.

Serving Sides
6. Instead of preparing potato and macaroni salad with mayonnaise, dress them with vinaigrette.
7. If you’re making coleslaw, try reduced-calorie mayo.
8. Serve whole-grain chips and salsa, baked beans or grilled veggies.

Downsizing Drinks
High-calorie drinks, such as soda, can add sugar and calories. Instead:
9. Offer water with slices of lemon or a splash of 100 percent fruit juice.
10. Make unsweetened tea. For a unique flavor, try a new herbal tea.

Grilled Tomatoes
Whip up this easy side in no time! You only need a few ingredients and it takes about 10 minutes total.

Ingredients
4 ripe tomatoes
1 tbsp. fresh oregano or 1 tsp. dried oregano
1 tsp. lemon pepper

Directions
Slice tomatoes in half, lengthwise. Prepare coals. Cover grill grid with foil. Place tomatoes on foil and sprinkle with oregano and lemon pepper. Grill tomatoes with cut side down, over hot coals, for about four to five minutes.

Each tomato contains about
30 calories, no fat, no cholesterol,
40 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrate,
2 g dietary fiber, 4 g sugars and 1 g protein.

Did you take our grilling quiz on the back cover?
Here are the answers:
1. FALSE. 95 percent lean is a better choice.
2. FALSE. Lots of sugar makes lemonade high in calories. Choose diet to cut calories.
3. TRUE. Fish is high in omega-3 fatty acids, which are heart healthy.
How to Reach Us
When it comes to managing your health, you're never alone. BlueHealth Advantage is your partner on the path to wellness. Program us into your cellphone or email contacts, and you can call or write whenever you have questions or need support:

Call: 877-348-4329
Fax: 800-255-2838
Email: wellness@nebraskablue.com
Write: 1919 Aksarben Drive, P.O. Box 3248, Omaha, NE 68180-0001

Mindful Living is provided to BlueHealth Advantage members by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. This information is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health and is not a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. Your contract may not cover all services referenced in this publication. See your contract for coverage information.

© 2013 Printed in U.S.A.

Summer Menu Makeover!
Summertime is a great time for picnics and barbecues. But how much do you know about making your menu healthy? Find out!
Take this quick quiz:
1. To cut calories and fat, choose 70 percent lean ground beef when making burgers.
   True / False
2. Lemonade is a low-calorie summer beverage.
   True / False
3. Grilled fish is a healthy barbecue choice.
   True / False

For answers and great grilling tips, look inside!
See page 3.

take a look inside!
1 Know Your ABCs for Heart Health
2 Simple Strategies to Stay Healthy
3 Cut Calories from Your Cookout

free health assessment
You’ve tested your menu smarts. Now know your own health risks. Take a fast, free health assessment at BlueHealthAdvantageNE.com.