

Quality Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems



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DIABETES CARE

Mental Health Can Improve Diabetes Management

Mental health is an important aspect of diabetes care. Thoughts, feelings and attitudes can affect the health of a person's body and exacerbate existing conditions. Depression, stress and anxiety can decrease a person's motivation and ability to perform daily functions, including managing their diabetes. Individuals with diabetes are two to three times more likely to have depression than those without the condition. It is important for people who have diabetes to understand that they are not alone and help is available.

Managing diabetes can be challenging for many patients. Daily attention is required for monitoring blood sugar levels, eating a healthy diet, getting enough physical activity, and taking medications as prescribed to reduce risk of complications from the disease. Individuals may experience diabetes distress – feelings such as anxiety, stress, guilt and frustration that arise from living with diabetes and the burden of self-management. Left untreated, these feelings can cause a person to fall into unhealthy habits, which may lead to other health complications.

Diabetes distress is a common occurrence among individuals with diabetes and is a natural reaction to the daily struggles of managing the long-term condition. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 33 to 50 percent of people with diabetes experience diabetes distress in any 18-month period. Individuals who

experience diabetes distress may exhibit the following symptoms:

- Feeling angry about diabetes and frustrated about the demands of managing the disease
- Worrying about managing diabetes poorly and feeling unmotivated to change their behavior
- Avoiding scheduled physician appointments
- Making unhealthy food choices regularly
- Failing to monitor blood sugar levels
- Feeling isolated and alone

Individuals who think they may be experiencing diabetes distress should talk with their physician and other members of their healthcare team, including dietitians, registered nurses, pharmacists and social workers. These specialists can assist in determining what areas of diabetes care are most distressing for the patient and help develop an individualized treatment plan.

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) offers a variety of diabetes resources and education that empower patients and encourage proactive self-management of their condition. The LMH Medication Therapy Clinic assists patients diagnosed with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Clinical pharmacists, nurses and dietitians specifically trained in diabetes assist patients with measuring and recording blood glucose levels, insulin usage and medication management. They also help patients learn to recognize signs and

symptoms to reduce the risk of diabetes-related complications.

Licking Memorial Diabetes Care offers diabetes self-management classes that are recognized by the American Diabetes Association. The classes are taught by registered nurses, dietitians and pharmacists to teach patients how to care for themselves on a daily basis. Topics include how to eat properly, medication management, blood glucose monitoring, the importance of activity, problem solving and how to reduce the risks of diabetes complications. Each education program offers dietitian counseling to assist with one-on-one patient diabetes management.

For more information about the LMH Medication Therapy Clinic and diabetes management, please call (220) 564-1898. Individuals interested in diabetes self-management classes may call (220) 564-4915.





Patient Story – Barbara Andersen

At 85 years old, Barbara Andersen expects to face health challenges. She underwent open heart surgery after a heart attack in 2001 and has struggled to maintain her wellness ever since. After a series of tests, Barbara learned she had diabetes and would need to self-inject insulin to maintain her blood sugar level. In 2020, she began experiencing dizziness and weakness. The health concerns progressively worsened, but Barbara had no idea what was happening.

One morning, Barbara woke to find she could not move very well. She felt so weak that she could barely raise herself up from her bed. She struggled to reach her phone and call her daughter, who arrived quickly and began giving Barbara orange juice. After a short time, Barbara felt better and realized she was experiencing hypoglycemia – a condition in which the blood sugar level is lower than normal. Blood sugar, or glucose, is the body's main energy source. The next morning, Barbara again suffered a case of hypoglycemia, and passed out. Her daughter encouraged her to discuss the issue with her primary care physician, Talya R. Greathouse, M.D., of Licking Memorial Family Practice – West Main. Dr. Greathouse recommended that Barbara visit the Licking Memorial Hospital Medication Therapy Clinic where the staff – which includes pharmacists, nurses and dietitians – assist in creating a treatment plan, and provide education about correct dosing and the signs and symptoms of complications caused by medications.

In September 2020, Barbara had her first appointment at the Clinic. At the time, she was on a fairly high dosage of basal insulin and needed a rapid-acting insulin as well. Basal insulins provide a steady amount of background insulin activity over the course

of a day. “The staff at the Clinic all were very friendly and so helpful,” Barbara said. “They asked me many questions to try to determine why I was experiencing such drastic highs and lows in my blood sugar levels.”

During the discussion, Barbara confessed she was injecting her insulin shots into her groin. “Someone I knew once told me she developed hard lumps in her stomach from the insulin injections, and I did not want that to happen to me,” she said. The Clinic staff explained that injecting into the groin was leading to poor insulin absorption. They offered her education on the proper technique and ways to avoid hypertrophy – the overgrowth of cells, usually fat cells, that makes the skin look lumpy.

The Clinic staff also were concerned about the incidents of hypoglycemia. Barbara seemed most susceptible to drops in glucose while she slept. In order to assist Barbara in managing the lows, staff members worked to acquire an integrated continuous glucose monitoring system for her. The device, worn on the arm, checks glucose levels with a painless, one-second scan instead of having to perform a fingerstick. It also includes alarms that notify the wearer if blood sugar is too low or too high. The alarms wake Barbara during the night if she needs to make a blood sugar adjustment. “The nurses worked very hard to obtain the device for me. It has been a lifesaver and made a difference in how I manage my diabetes,” Barbara said. “I am feeling more successful about my own care, and I want to make the changes because I know taking the proper precautions will please the Clinic staff.”

Barbara visits the Clinic every six weeks. She has reduced her basal insulin dosage by over half, stopped taking the rapid-acting

insulin, and reduced her A1C level. A1C refers to a minor component of hemoglobin – the oxygen-carrying protein that gives blood its red color. “Everyone at the Clinic is focused on assuring I am following the proper guidelines for my medication and overall wellbeing,” Barbara said. “They have been great to me, and I’m so thankful for their attention and care they take to ensure I have all the tools I need to be successful.” Referrals to the Medication Therapy Clinic are accepted from Licking Memorial Endocrinology and primary care physicians.

In keeping with COVID-19 restrictions, Barbara has spent much of her time at home over the past year. She was very excited to return to church and spend time with her family. Barbara moved to Granville in 1972 after her husband had been transferred to the area for his job. The couple had traveled to a number of different states and considered Colorado their home. However, they both loved the Granville area and decided to stay even after retirement. Her daughter, Sharon Phelps, moved with the family to Ohio and also made it her home. Sharon earned her bachelor and master degrees from The Ohio State University and currently serves as a financial advisor. Her sons, Robert and David, graduated from Granville Exempted Village Schools. Robert also earned his degree from Ohio State and is now retired from Holophane. David earned his degree from Kent State and is employed with Cleveland.com reporting mostly on the Browns. Barbara also has three grandchildren.

Diabetes Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

1. Much of the care that patients with diabetes receive takes place in the outpatient or physician office setting. The physician offices of Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) measure the most critical indicators for diabetes care.

	LMHP 2018	LMHP 2019	LMHP 2020	National
LMHP patients with diabetes receiving eye exam	59%	74%	63%*	58% ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes having HbA1C test	94%	95%	91%*	88% ⁽¹⁾
				LMHP Goal
LMHP patients with diabetes having lipid profile	90%	90%	85%*	90%
LMHP patients with diabetes having microalbuminuria test	86%	86%	79%*	85%
				National
LMHP patients with diabetes having foot exam	86%	86%	73%*	80% ⁽²⁾

2. The hemoglobin A1C (HbA1C) test is a simple lab test that shows the average amount of sugar (also called glucose) that has been in a person's blood over an extended period of time. While having the testing done is important, the test results (or outcomes) indicate how well the physician, in collaboration with the patient, is managing the diabetes. While the goal for most people with diabetes is 7% or less, anything less than 8% is considered a good degree of control of blood sugar levels.

	LMHP 2018	LMHP 2019	LMHP 2020	National ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes with HbA1C less than or equal to 7%	53%	55%	47%*	38%
LMHP patients with diabetes with HbA1C less than or equal to 8%	74%	76%	69%*	59%

3. People with diabetes are at high risk for heart disease. An elevated LDL (“bad”) cholesterol test reveals if an individual has unhealthy fat levels, which increase the risk for heart disease – a very serious complication of diabetes. An LDL level of 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) is considered best for heart health.

	LMHP 2018	LMHP 2019	LMHP 2020	National ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes with LDL less than or equal to 100 mg/dL	67%	75%	74%*	48%

4. The Community Case Management (CCM) program at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) provides services to people with diabetes in the community including the Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support program. The American Diabetes Association recommends that a person with diabetes should have an HbA1C blood test at least every six months to monitor glucose levels. LMH staff members work closely with patients and their physicians to ensure that this test is performed as recommended in order to manage each patient's condition better.

	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	LMH 2020	LMH Goal
Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support participants who obtained an HbA1C test	100%	100%	100%	Greater than 85%

5. A1C is the standard for measuring blood sugar management in people with diabetes. Studies show higher A1C levels to be associated with the risk of certain diabetes complications (eye, kidney and nerve disease). For every one percent decrease in A1C, there is significant protection against those complications.

	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	LMH 2020	LMH Goal
Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support participants with a decrease HbA1C or within normal limits	91%	84%	79%	greater than 80%

*Due to COVID-19 restrictions throughout 2020, some patients were unable to obtain regular testing or attend in-person appointments.

Data Footnotes:

(1) Average of reported Commercial, Medicare and Medicaid/HEDIS measures.

(2) National Committee for Quality Assurance – NCQA Diabetic Recognition Program

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Coping with Diabetes Distress

Managing diabetes can be difficult. Individuals with diabetes may begin to feel overwhelmed by the daily pressures and demands of coping with the disease, such as checking blood sugar levels, making healthy food choices, staying physically active and managing medication. In addition, patients may worry about having low or high blood sugar levels and developing diabetes-related complications, such as heart disease or nerve damage. When a person experiences an abundance of anxiety, frustration, anger and burnout, it may become difficult to sustain the daily requirements of diabetes management. The following suggestions can help patients cope with diabetes and manage their stress.

- Schedule an appointment with an endocrinologist. Physicians who specialize in diabetes care are likely to have a better understanding of the challenges facing patients with diabetes.
- Ask for a referral to a mental health counselor who specializes in chronic health conditions.
- Join a diabetes support group. Sharing concerns with others who are experiencing similar circumstances can help alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Focus on small diabetes management goals. Achieving several small goals can increase motivation and confidence and reduce the chances of feeling overwhelmed.
- Allow loved ones to help. Family members and friends can remind individuals to take their medication and monitor blood sugar levels. They also can help prepare healthy meals and be an exercise partner.
- Participate in enjoyable activities. Reserve time to do something fun, such as talking with a friend, playing a game or working on a hobby.

People struggling with diabetes distress are not alone. It is important for individuals with diabetes to acknowledge their feelings and seek help when they are struggling. Patients who are concerned about their mental health should contact their physician for immediate help.



**Licking Memorial
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Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Diabetes Care**. You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Health Systems is measurably different ... for your health!

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

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