

PRISM

Your Resource for Independent Living • Spring, Summer 2009

DIABETES MANAGEMENT WITH IMPAIRED VISION

EACH YEAR, doctors diagnose over a million new cases of diabetes in America, and with the aging of our population, diabetes only becomes more prevalent. Unfortunately, this situation isn't projected to improve; diabetes has tripled in prevalence since 1980, and continues to spread.

Diabetes interferes with the body's ability to properly process blood sugar, resulting in an excess remaining in the bloodstream. Consequently, a decrease in the efficacy of circulation occurs; this has adverse consequences for our whole bodies—including our eyes.

In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of new blindness in adults aged 20-74, with over 12,000 cases reported each year! Diabetic Retinopathy is the primary cause, but diabetes also increases the likelihood of developing Glaucoma, Cataracts and other eye diseases.

MONITORING YOUR HEALTH

For diabetics, maintaining healthy blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood glucose minimizes the chance of developing diabetic complications. Doctors usually test blood cholesterol in a laboratory, but patients can monitor blood pressure and blood glucose independently. Talking blood pressure cuffs easily address the first task—the second can be complicated.

Blood Glucose

Most diabetics monitor their blood sugar with a small, hand held blood glucose monitor. Persons with visual impairment have special concerns when choosing a monitor. Two options are a standard monitor with a large print display, or a talking monitor.

If using a standard monitor, use it in concert with a strong magnifier to enhance accessibility. Also, make sure to optimize the testing environment with good lighting and sufficient surface contrast.

Consider several issues before purchasing a talking meter. First, consider what percentage of its functions the meter confers audibly. Are there some features which are only communicated visually? Does the meter have tactile marks or impressions that allow for ease of use?

Whatever choice you make, verify that your new meter is an efficient and quality tool—glucose monitoring takes place several times a day, so choose carefully!

Once a meter is chosen, glucose testing can begin. First, explore the meter and strips to find information that will help when testing—for example, explore the strips to find the “test site”—the area of the strip which accepts blood samples. The meter or strips may have tactile markings or features distinguished by texture or color. Note: Most test strips are touchable, but some are not, so check with the strip manufacturer before performing a full exploration.

Work with a health care team to determine your best glucose test site. Depending on many factors, this may be an “alternate test site” such as a thigh or forearm, or it may be a finger.

Once you decide where to test, collect a blood sample. First, locate the meter test slot—using a low vision aid or by touch. Then, insert the test strip into the slot; finally, collect the sample. To do this, many visually impaired people choose to “move toward the pain.” This may work best if a finger is used as the test site; with other areas of the body, less sensation occurs. Prick the chosen location with the lancet, then slowly move the test strip (in glucose meter) in the direction of discomfort. **CONTINUED ►**

Save the Date

Join Us in Celebrating
Our Commitment to Community
Presented by **ValueVillage**

Share the Vision

Inaugural Fundraising Breakfast
& Focus Award Presentation

October 8, 2009 at 7:30 a.m.

Bell Harbor International
Conference Center

Ticket \$50/Table of Ten \$500

Sponsorship opportunities are still available.
To support or attend this event, please
contact Michael Craig at 206-525-5556 or
mcraig@csbps.com

FOOT CARE WITH DIABETES AND LOW VISION



PEOPLE WITH diabetes can develop many foot problems. Even commonplace problems, like cuts, nicks and cracked heels can lead to serious health concerns.

Since complications (up to and including amputation) can arise if foot care is neglected, develop a comprehensive

health and prevention plan, and keep those feet feeling good!

- Wash feet daily with mild soap and warm (NOT HOT) water
- If your hands and fingers retain sensitivity, perform a tactile foot inspection each day—check the entire surface of each foot (including your nails and between your toes) for abnormalities, which include cracks, hot spots, calluses, dry or rough areas and color changes
- Before putting on your shoes, inspect the insides for foreign objects (including pieces of toenail and torn shoe lining)
- Contact your physician immediately if you have a foot injury that is painful or swollen
- Make a well foot appointment with a podiatrist at least once a year, making sure your podiatrist knows you have diabetes
- Clip toenails straight across and file with an emery board to avoid sharp edges
- DO NOT soak feet—this can dry out skin and increase the chance of cracking

AUBURN LIONS STEP UP!



Radine Lazier, Joyce Shoemaker, Jeffrey Gerhardstein and John Partridge at CCTV ribbon cutting

THE AUBURN Lions Club partnered with CSBPS and the Auburn Senior Center to make a state of the art video magnifier available to all Auburnites. The Senior Center is next to the Auburn Library, at 808 9th St. SE/(253) 931-3016.

Particular thanks to John Partridge and Bob Johnson of the Lions, Jeffrey Gerhardstein of CSBPS and the Auburn Senior Center staff! We couldn't have done it without you.

◀ **CONTINUED** Most meters give audible confirmation that the sample is adequate for glucose testing.

TAKING MEDICATION

For visually impaired insulin dependent diabetics, ensuring correct dosage can be tricky. For this reason, many visually impaired diabetics find insulin pens convenient. Insulin pens are available pre filled or refillable, deliver insulin in incremental doses through the turn of a dial, and are discreet and portable. Insulin pen dials produce a click that can be felt and heard. Whether insulin is self administered with a pen, a syringe system, an air powered injector or an insulin pump, patients should work with their diabetes care team to develop adaptive strategies that allow for independent control of insulin intake.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Monitoring medical signs is important; healthy lifestyle changes are a critical part of diabetes self management. Yet many materials which facilitate such changes are not available in accessible formats! But usable information about diabetes and lifestyle change *can* be found.

Diet change is a great first step toward a new and healthy life, and speaking with a nutritionist about adapting favorite recipes to your new diet is a great place to start. Additionally, many libraries offer publications regarding diet therapy in accessible formats such as audio and large print. To aid your search, the Library of Congress [LOC] subject heading for such resources is Diabetes-

-Diet Therapy--Recipes. If you need assistance finding diabetic recipe books, ask a librarian. And of course, there are many recipes tailored to diabetics available online. Three great sites to browse: diabeticgourmet.com, recipezaar.com/recipes/diabetic and tracker.diabetes.org/myfoodadvisor.html. Or if you can playback digital audio, visit nlstalkingbooks.org/dtb to access many audio books about diabetes.

General information about diabetes can be found in *The Voice of the Diabetic*, a magazine targeted to people living with diabetic complications. Visit http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Voice_of_the_Diabetic.asp to learn more and request a free subscription. The CDC maintains and updates several podcasts regarding diabetes and other timely health concerns, download at <http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/>. Also, visit http://www.csbps.com/publications/public_information.html to view our publications about diabetes.

Remember, when you take charge of your health, you decrease the chance of developing dangerous complications from diabetes. However daunting, taking responsibility for your medical care improves your quality of life AND your prognosis.

If you live in King, Snohomish or Skagit County, a CSBPS rehabilitation specialist can visit your home and help you develop adaptive techniques for managing diabetes. For more information, or to contact us about where to obtain Diabetes Self Management Education, visit www.csbps.com or call **800 458-4888**.

JOIN OUR VISIONARY SOCIETY

Envisioning a world of independence and support for those with impaired vision—now and for generations to come.

IT'S EASY to join The Visionary Society. Just remember CSBPS in your will or estate plans, and let us know. That's all it takes to leave a legacy—and to change someone's life!

By making a charitable gift in your will, you help ensure independence and better quality of life for others; you guarantee that the same help and support you currently enjoy continues to be available!

Visionary Society Members receive many benefits, including:

- Potential tax advantages (see your estate planner for more details)
- Permanent recognition at our office in Seattle
- A desktop keepsake inscribed with The Visionary Society logo
- A frameable certificate designating you as a Visionary Society member
- The knowledge that your future gift will make a real difference in the lives of visually impaired individuals in our community!

CALL TO ACTION

ACCORDING TO www.recovery.wa.gov "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)... provides for unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability so that you will be able to know how, when, and where your tax dollars are being spent."

Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) will receive approximately 1.5 million dollars for vocational rehabilitation services and \$700,000 to support Older Blind Independent Living Services. CSBPS believes you have a voice in deciding how this money is spent! Would our community benefit from more low vision clinics or social workers? An easily accessible website full of information and resources that help you? This is an opportune time to engage with our government and secure additional services and programs that are important to you!

We invite you to share your ideas! Please go to www.csbps.com to submit your ideas, or email us at stimulus@csbps.com. You can also call DSB at 1-800-552-7103.

John Schaar said "The future is not some place we are going, but a place we are creating." Let's create it together.

KITCHEN TOOLS FOR LOW VISION

OUR SPECIALIZED kitchen gadgets make it possible for people with impaired vision to prepare food efficiently and safely. Visit www.sightconnection.com for our full selection. To learn about new products as we add them, follow our twitter feed at twitter.com/SightConnection.

COLORFUL MEASURING SET



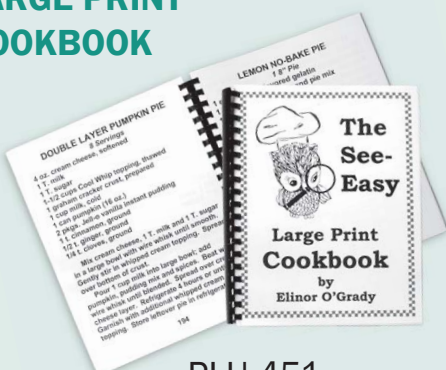
PLU 483

TALKING COOKING THERMOMETER



PLU 447

LARGE PRINT COOKBOOK



PLU 451

TALKING FOOD SCALE



PLU 465

COOKING WITH LOW VISION

COOKING FOR one's self is such a simple, comforting act. With the right tools, and some easy tips and tricks, persons with impaired vision can continue preparing food for themselves, their family and their friends!

- Use kitchen utensils that contrast with your ingredients
- Use a cutting board that contrasts with your ingredients
- Wear a full apron to protect your clothes from any spills
- Enlarge favorite recipes with a photocopier, scanner or CCTV
- Wear long oven gloves, to protect yourself from burns
- Mark any difficult to operate appliances with tactile bump dots

Refer to our information series for more information about cooking with low vision.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS!

THANK YOU to all the donors who made our winter fund-raising drive a success! In December, we asked you to *Share the Vision* in our appeal letter. We let folks know about why we're here—about how we help.

When we asked you to *Share the Vision*, we were asking you to help us build a future for our agency, for the people we serve today and for the many, many people we hope to serve in the future.

So many of you are impacted by the state of our economy, but you still saw a way to give! Your donations help us continue to serve *all* clients in need. Our work is not possible without individual donations made by people just like you. Thank you; we look forward to working together again!

IN KIND DONATION WISH LIST

CSBPS WELCOMES donations of adaptive aids in good working order. Clean out your drawers, and help someone in need!

- CCTVS (Video Magnifiers) in good working order
- Low-powered (non-prescription strength) Magnifiers
- Large Button Telephones
- Talking Clocks
- Talking Watches
- Long White Canes
- Support Canes (any—we can tape them if they are not white)

Thank you for your generosity and support!

HOW TO REACH US

PHONE 206 525-5556
TOLL FREE 800 458-4888
FAX 206 525-0422
EMAIL csbps@csbps.com

WEBSITES

AGENCY www.csbps.com
STORE
www.sightconnection.com
CLOTHING DONATIONS
www.donatecsb.org

AGENCY, STORE ADDRESS

9709 THIRD AVE NE, #100
SEATTLE, WA 98115-2027

HOURS

AGENCY 8 AM-5 PM, M-F
STORE 9 AM-5 PM, M-F

CAR AND TRUCK DONATIONS

HAVE AN old vehicle you can't or don't drive anymore? Donate it to CSBPS. We'll pick it up at your house and handle all paperwork, including title transfers.

Visit www.irs.gov to learn about the tax benefits of vehicle donations. Call **800 870-3659** to schedule your donation!



DONATE USED GOODS TO CSBPS!



DID YOU know... Community Services for the Blind operates a fleet of trucks dedicated to collecting donations of used clothing and household goods from homes throughout our community?

Call **800 472-2244**, or schedule your pickup online at www.donatecsb.org. Call us—we're happy to help!

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Return Service Requested

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2009

