American Diabetes Association®

Vaccine Decision Balance Table

Curriculum Area Content	Benefits	Concerns	Action Items for People with Diabetes (PWD)
Diabetes Pathophysiology Diabetes increases vulnerability to infection. People with diabetes have poorer immune responses and delayed recovery, so vaccinations are an important part of staying healthy.	The importance of vaccination in people with diabetes is to prevent illness and protect health.	Preventable illnesses, such as influenza (flu), pneumonia, and COVID-19, can make you very sick and can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).	▪ Protect yourself from viruses and other infections by following the recommended immunization routine from the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) as part of comprehensive diabetes care.
Nutrition and Wellness A well-balanced, healthy eating pattern will help strengthen your immune system (a lot of which is located in your gut), which helps prevent illness from viruses or other germs that are easy to catch from someone else.	An eating pattern high in vitamins A, C, D, and E and protein builds antibodies, supports creation of new immune cells, and improves healing. The good bacteria in the gut is supported by consuming probiotic foods and following a healthy meal plan that helps decrease inflammation in the body, such as a Mediterranean-style eating pattern. Good hydration helps support immune function and eliminates toxins.	Western diets can cause more inflammation and change the good bacteria in the gut, which can affect how one's immune system works. Alcohol can weaken the immune system.	▪ Eat foods high in fiber and Vitamins A, C, D, E, and Zinc. (Examples include strawberries, broccoli, low fat dairy, eggs, whole grains, carrots, nuts and seeds, and beans.) Include lean protein to help keep your immune system strong. ▪ Reduce use of packaged or ready-made foods. ▪ Include foods that contain probiotics (such as yogurt, pickles, sauerkraut, buttermilk, tempeh, kefir, or kimchi). ▪ Choose water or a zero-calorie drink to keep yourself hydrated and support your immune system.
Physical Activity The effects of exercise on your immune system are complex. Both regular exercise and single workouts can make big changes in immune cells and the proteins that muscles produce.	Regular physical activity can strengthen the immune system, which may lower risk for conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, and depression.	Being inactive can contribute to the buildup of abdominal fat, which is closely linked to inflammation and chronic illness.	▪ Engage in at least **150 minutes or more** of moderate or vigorous physical activity per week including two sessions of strength training. ▪ Interrupt prolonged sitting every 30 minutes.

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Monitoring Monitoring blood glucose levels and maintaining them within the recommended range when healthy can help individuals avoid more serious health issues caused by significant hyperglycemia (high blood glucose) during illness.	Monitoring blood glucose levels allows individuals to identify fluctuations and respond promptly to any changes, thereby reducing the risk of complications.	High blood glucose affects the ability to fight infection.	▪ Monitor your blood glucose more frequently or wear a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) before, during, and after vaccination(s). ▪ Manage your blood glucose before getting ill. ▪ Discuss the sick day plan handout.
Medications Main idea: Taking medications to manage your blood glucose levels helps manage hyperglycemia (high blood glucose levels) if you do become ill with COVID-19 or other infections.	Taking diabetes medication can help a person's immune system by lowering blood glucose levels and reducing inflammation throughout the body. This means taking your diabetes medications helps both protect you from infections and manage your blood glucose while ill.	If someone doesn't take their diabetes medicine and their blood sugar stays high, it can make it harder for their body to fight off infections. High blood sugar can weaken the immune system, cause more inflammation, which means they may get sick more easily.	▪ Take your diabetes medications as prescribed. ▪ Get your vaccination(s) as recommended by your doctor. ▪ Discuss your vaccine history with your health care team. ▪ Manage your blood glucose well to minimize the risk of complications when sick. ▪ Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have with recommended vaccinations.
Reducing Risk (Short- and Long-Term Complications) Preventing potentially serious illnesses caused by viruses is highly recommended to prevent both acute and chronic complications. Vaccines, like any medicine, may cause some side effects. These are typically mild and short-lived, signaling that your body is building protection. Common side effects of vaccines include pain or swelling at the injection site, mild fever and chills, feeling tired, headaches, and muscle and/or joint aches. These reactions usually resolve within one to three days.	Vaccines stimulate our immune systems to prevent certain infectious diseases. Immunizations train your immune system to recognize and fight off specific diseases. They help your body build protection, without causing serious illness.	Any illness can cause blood glucose levels to move out of your target range. Most often illness causes blood glucose to elevate, but low blood glucose can also occur.	▪ Monitor your blood glucose more frequently if you feel any different or experience different symptoms post vaccination. ▪ Talk to your doctor to determine which vaccination you need and when to get it.

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Support System and Healthy Coping Living with diabetes can be challenging, having a strong support system is important. Managing stress and getting vaccinated can help reduce illness and boost resilience. People living with diabetes experience additional burdens on top of everything else that they must manage in their daily lives.	Having good support helps people with diabetes get vaccines by making it easier for them to overcome worries, problems getting the vaccine, or wrong information. Since diabetes can make their immune system weaker, people with diabetes are more likely to get very sick from diseases like the flu, pneumonia, and COVID-19.	Managing diabetes without a support system or effective coping strategies may result in both short- and long-term complications, and can increase susceptibility to infectious diseases. If you get sick, you may miss work or school and/or fall behind on housework or other responsibilities.	▪ Explore and identify support systems. ▪ Utilize support systems regularly. ▪ Learn more about different vaccines and seek out information if needed.
Diabetes Distress Living with diabetes can be very exhausting, and those who manage it can face the danger of burning out. This is called diabetes distress. Diabetes distress is important to recognize because it is treatable. If left untreated, it can lead to mismanagement of blood glucose levels and increased skepticism towards doctor recommendations, including getting vaccinated.	Diabetes distress is managed by supportive, personalized education. This fosters trust, builds confidence, and helps individuals make informed choices such as receiving recommended vaccinations.	Diabetes distress may influence how people approach not only glucose management, but also preventive measures like vaccines.	▪ Improve your understanding of what diabetes distress looks like. ▪ Rely on your support network. ▪ Obtain personalized education by trusted doctors or health care team members.

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