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## HOSPICE PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### DIABETES

#### What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic medical condition characterized by elevated blood sugar levels resulting from either insufficient insulin production or the body's inability to effectively use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar, allowing cells to absorb and use glucose for energy. There are different types of diabetes, including Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes.

#### What are the Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes?

Diabetes can present with a range of symptoms, and the severity may vary. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Increased thirst and hunger
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue and weakness
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing wounds or frequent infections
- Tingling or numbness in the extremities
- Irritability and mood changes
- Recurrent skin infections

#### What potential factors can cause Diabetes?

The development of diabetes is influenced by a combination of genetic, lifestyle, and environmental factors. Some potential factors include:

- Genetic predisposition
- Obesity and excess body weight
- Physical inactivity
- Poor dietary choices, including excessive consumption of sugary and processed foods
- Age (risk increases with age)
- Family history of diabetes
- Ethnicity (some populations are at a higher risk)
- Gestational diabetes during pregnancy
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- High blood pressure

#### What can be done for the person with Diabetes?

Managing diabetes involves adopting a comprehensive approach to control blood sugar levels and minimize complications. Here are some general strategies:

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- Consult with healthcare professionals to establish an individualized diabetes management plan.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity and a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Monitor blood sugar levels regularly as recommended by healthcare providers.
- Take medications (oral or injectable insulin) as prescribed, if needed.
- Engage in diabetes education to enhance understanding of the condition and its management.
- Implement stress management techniques, as stress can affect blood sugar levels.
- Regularly check blood pressure and cholesterol levels, addressing cardiovascular risk factors.
- Attend regular medical check-ups to assess overall health and detect potential complications.
- Manage weight through a combination of diet and exercise.
- Stay informed about the latest diabetes research and treatment options.

**Open communication with healthcare providers, active participation in self-care, and collaboration with diabetes educators and support groups contribute to effective diabetes management. Additionally, connecting with diabetes organizations can offer valuable resources and a supportive community for individuals living with diabetes.**