Can you hear me now?
Can you hear me now? Good... Are those commercials about hearing the guy on the phone still playing? Have you asked yourself how well you can hear lately? You should. Talking about diabetes complications can seem like the same song and dance. Wear supportive socks. Check your feet. Manage your blood sugar. Pay attention to your A1c levels. Don’t leave a non-healing wound to fester. Have annual eye exams—diabetes is the number one cause of blindness in US adults. But how often are you told to get your hearing checked?

A recent study suggests that diabetes contributes to auditory system damage. The auditory system is the parts of the ear that allow us to hear. Over time, high blood sugar damages blood vessels. Blood vessels in your ears are particularly delicate, and researchers think those vessels are more likely to be damaged by high blood sugar. These findings need further study, but it should be noted that hearing impairment affects about 16.1% of US adults. What’s more, only about one third (35%) of this hearing loss is due to aging. Other causes may include repetitive exposure to loud noises, head injuries, family history and congenital defects (problems you are born with), and possibly, diabetes. Hearing impairment can be particularly disabling, so it’s safe to say that our hearing is worth having checked.

Surely, your doctor would have told you if your ears were giving out, right? Unfortunately, only 14% of physicians perform routine hearing checks. It might be up to you to bring it up. Leaving hearing loss untreated can have consequences. This can include irritability, reduced alertness and safety risks, as well as impaired memory and overall stress.

So, pay attention to yourself and note if your hearing may be suffering. The next time you see your doctor, consider asking for a hearing test. And as always, keep your blood sugar in check. It may save you ears so you can continue to enjoy that favorite song of yours!
Getting it Under Control in 2017!

It’s the New Year, so it’s time to do something to better your life. The New Year can be just the motivation you need to revitalize your efforts to keep your diabetes under control. Managing diabetes can feel like a full time job, but by doing so you can help ensure you feel better and avoid the devastating consequences of uncontrolled diabetes.

First, take inventory. Are there any bad habits that have creeped into your daily routine? It is important to consider where you are before you start making goals. When you sit down to make your Diabetes Goals make sure that your goals are SMART! SMART means that they are **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Attainable**, **Relevant**, and **Time-based**. We’ll talk about SMART goals later. Also remember to be proud of the good habits you have created. Combining these forces can help you accomplish the goals you set.

Next up- think about the basics. Do you check your blood glucose as often as you should? Take your medication as prescribed? Get up and move? Remember to check for symptoms like foot sores? Have you been able to maintain your current weight? Do you smoke? Have high blood pressure? Addressing any of these areas will help you better manage your diabetes.

Make a SMART goal. See the box to the right for definitions and then follow along. An example of a SMART goal can be as simple as carbohydrate counting three days a week for the next month. As you can see, this goal is **specific**; you know exactly what to do. You can **measure** whether or not you have carb counted three days a week. Making your goals **attainable** will depend on you, so be honest with yourself about your abilities so you won’t discourage yourself in the long run.

If you often forget to meal plan, a goal like this would be **relevant** for you. It is also **time-sensitive** since you will reflect in a month on your progress. And just like that, you have a SMART goal!

If you aren’t exactly sure how to go about addressing a change you would like to make, consult your doctor or Diabetes Educator. Your doctor can refer you to a diabetes education program if you have not attended one in a while. A Certified Diabetes Educator can help you identify changes that will improve your diabetes control, and develop your SMART goals to achieve those changes. She should be able to help you determine if there is a specific area you should address first and the best way to go about doing so. You can also stay tuned for Diabetes Life Lines Back to Basics section that features helpful reminders on some of these topics. Start with one goal and see how 2017 can help you better manage your Diabetes!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Specific</strong></th>
<th>Your plan of action should be clear enough that you know exactly what to do.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurable</strong></td>
<td>Can you count it? How many times a day/week/month/year should you do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attainable</strong></td>
<td>Being realistic with yourself is important for your own success. Make goals that you have the power to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant</strong></td>
<td>Does the change matter enough to you that you are willing to put in the effort? Is the change you want to make going to help you reach a bigger goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time-Based</strong></td>
<td>Decide when it will be time to reevaluate. Habits take time, so make a timeline that is flexible and not rushed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Back to Basics: Carbohydrate Counting

By now, you probably know that carbohydrates are a nutrient in food that affects your blood sugar. Eat too many, and your blood sugar may get too high. If you don’t eat enough carbohydrate, your blood sugar may be too low. So what’s a person with diabetes to do? Count your carbohydrates and be your own detective!

Carbohydrate counting is an easy way to plan meals and better manage your blood sugar. With practice, you will be able to swiftly figure out how much carbohydrate is in a food and more importantly, a whole meal or snack. If you use insulin, carbohydrate counting can help you and your doctor decide how much insulin you need at mealtime. For everyone with diabetes, carbohydrate counting will help you know how foods affect your blood sugar.

The goal of carbohydrate counting is to ensure that you the right amount of carbohydrates for your body. Your doctor, a registered dietitian, or certified diabetes educator (CDE) should tell you how many grams of carbohydrate you need at each meal and snack. According to the American Diabetes Association, most people need somewhere between 45-60 grams of carbohydrates per meal and 15 to 30 grams per snack. To carbohydrate count, you will need your personalized goal for how many grams of carbohydrate you should have per meal or snack. The table on the next page provides a quick reference to what 15 grams of carbohydrate looks like for common foods. Your doctor, dietitian, or CDE can give you a bigger list of common foods with their carbohydrate amounts. You can also use the nutrition label when eating packaged foods.

The best way to carbohydrate count is to meal plan. Remember, this is an instance where you want to hit the target without going over, so planning can help! If you plan your meals, you can be sure to eat the right foods to get the right amount of carbohydrates at each meal and snack.

Planning the carbohydrate backbone of your meals lets you fill in the rest of the plan with other healthy foods you need to fuel your body. This includes lots of non-starchy vegetables like lettuce, mushrooms, and tomatoes. In addition, adding protein and fat sources like lettuce,

Continued on next page
mushrooms, and tomatoes. (See box on page 5 for more examples). In addition, adding protein and fat sources like lean chicken and eggs as well as healthy fats, like avocado, nuts, and olive oil for cooking can help build tasty recipes and meals that keep you full and your blood sugar stable. A sample menu with the carbohydrate backbone planned is on page 5, along with a list of starchy and non-starchy vegetables, hidden sources of carbohydrates, and some of the foods people often forget to count.

If you feel like carb counting is restrictive or difficult, try to remember that it takes a little practice and over time it will get easier. Practice measuring out foods you like to eat. This will help you become a faster counter and have a better idea of how much you are eating when you go out to eat. More importantly, remember that you can eat carbohydrates. Choosing whole grains, beans, low fat dairy, and healthy starchy vegetables will help you get the most nutrients out of your choices. Avoiding “empty” choices like sugary drinks and baked goods will leave you carbohydrate counts for more filling choices.

So get back to basics and carbohydrate count for a healthier new year!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods and Amounts for 15 g Carbohydrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains like oatmeal, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice and barley, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastas, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casseroles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads or Tortillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy Vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat-free yogurts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jellies and Jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn, oil popped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Fries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount for 15 grams carbohydrate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 oz. or about one small piece, or ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 cup, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 cup, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 medium slice or 1 (6 inch) tortilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ounces or ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cups, popped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ medium fry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal Time</th>
<th>Menu</th>
<th>Carbohydrate Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Breakfast** | ½ cup oatmeal (15 grams)  
½ cup berries (15 grams)  
2/3 cup fat-free yogurt (15 grams) | 3 choices (45 grams) |
| **Lunch** | 2 cups soup (30 grams)  
1 slice medium bread (15 grams) | 3 choices (45 grams) |
| **Dinner** | 1/3 cup brown rice, cooked (15 grams)  
½ black beans, cooked (15 grams)  
1 6-inch tortilla (15 grams) | 3 choices (45 grams) |

*This menu just shows carbohydrate choices. Remember to also include your lean protein foods, non-starchy vegetables, fats, and other foods with little to no carbohydrate.*

### Non-Starchy Vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Peppers
- Onions
- Artichokes
- Brussel Sprouts
- Eggplant
- Jicama
- Okra
- Rutabaga
- Carrots

### Starchy Vegetables
- Sweet potatoes
- White potatoes
- Peas
- Corn
- Pumpkin
- Winter Squash
- Parsnips

### Hidden Sources of Carbohydrates
- Sugar-free syrups and foods
- Condiments, like ketchup
- Gum and other candies

**DON'T FORGET TO COUNT!**
- SUGAR IN COFFEE OR TEA
- MILK
- SAUCES
- SALAD DRESSINGS
Lentil Soup

Try this lentil soup to warm up on a cold winter day. It offers a lot of fiber and protein for very few calories. At 19 grams of carbohydrate per serving, you would count this as one serving of carbohydrate (~15 grams). Remember to count your carbohydrates and talk to your doctor for your personalized per meal and snack carbohydrate goals.

Makes 8 Servings

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup diced carrot
- ½ cup diced bell pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tsp minced oregano & dried basil
- 2 cups dry lentils
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- Pepper to taste
- 5 cups reduced sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- ½ cup diced tomato
- ½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 tsp dried parsley

Directions:

2. Add garlic and tomato paste and heat stirring for another minute.
3. Add lentils and broth. Bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 10 more minutes.

Nutrition Information per serving:

- Calories: 145
- Carbohydrate: 19 grams
- Fat: 4 grams
- Protein: 9 grams
- Sodium: 360 milligrams
- Fiber: 8 grams
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams

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Dear Friend,

*Diabetes Life Lines* is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by an Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist and other health professionals from the University of Georgia. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes self-management, healthy recipes and news about important diabetes-related events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension Office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

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