"Do not stay there with problems around

and communities must also play a role.

risks of conditions like pre-eclampsia

those risks," Akori explains.

Diabetes care: How families help patients live better lives

By Violah Niwaha

A diagnosis of diabetes can feel like a sudden pause in a person's life story and that of their family — a moment filled with questions, fear and uncertainty. But with the right care, understanding and support; it becomes a condition that can be managed rather than feared.

Emily Bariyo, a retired teacher and mother, shares her experience caring for her husband who has lived with diabetes for more than 20 years.

"My husband was diagnosed with diabetes in the early 2000s, and we have been on this journey for nearly 25 years," she says.

Bariyo adds that caregiving involves financial, physical, emotional and spiritual support.

"We follow the medical prescriptions carefully, especially for medication and meals. I make sure he eats on time before taking his drugs."

Bariyo says faith has also sustained them through the years.

Her husband's diet mainly consists of vegetables, small portions of fruits and other foods recommended by doctors.

However, the condition became more serious in 2019 when he developed an ulcer on his left leg. Doctors at Kisiizi Hospital recommended amputation.

"The wound healed quickly after the operation and the pain stopped," she says. "But the relief did not last long because in 2021, we were back in the same hospital waiting for doctors to amputate his right leg," she says.

The situation forced her to make a difficult decision.

"I requested early retirement from work so I could become his full-time caregiver," Bariyo says.

Their children were mostly away in boarding schools, while the older ones were in Kampala for school and work.

NUTRITION

Nutritionist Amina Rejoice emphasizes that diet plays a critical role in managing diabetes.

"The goal is to keep blood sugar stable by choosing foods that release glucose slowly and by eating balanced meals that include carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats and fibre," she says.

Amina explains that carbohydrates with a low glycaemic index are recommended because they release sugar gradually into the bloodstream.



Emily Bariyo (right) and her husband. Anyone caring for a sick partner, parent, or loved one, requires patience

Their visits during holidays, she says, bring much-needed support. Bariyo believes caregiving involves more than medicine.

"Healing is not only about drugs, wounds or medical check-ups. It also requires comfort, courage, support and prayer," she says.

For anyone caring for a sick partner, parent, or loved one, Bariyo says patience and presence matter.

UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

Troy Edmond Ongom, a clinical officer at Mildmay, explains that the body relies on glucose (sugar) for energy and proper functioning.

When food is digested, it breaks down into small particles, including glucose, which enters the bloodstream and is transported to different cells in the body.

Without proper management, diabetes can lead to complications. Wounds, for example, heal more slowly because high blood sugar makes it easier for infections to develop.