

Diabetes

Managing

Your

Diabetes

A Patient's Guide

This patient guide will provide you with general information related to diabetes. It is only the beginning of the educational process that you will have to go through to be an active and effective partner with a health care team in managing your diabetes.

Contents

The general information below is presented in this patient guide. It will give you tools to assist you in your self-management of diabetes.

These tools will only be useful if you use them.

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This patient guide does *not* give specific treatment plans for your diabetes. You and your health care team will develop an individual plan to manage your diabetes. You can record your treatment goals and monitor your progress on the tear out cards provided within this brochure.

- Exercise
- Stress
- Heart Health
- Eye Care
- Foot Care
- Dental Care
- Eating Away From Home
- Travel Tips
- Sick Days
- Low Blood Sugar
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Managing Your Diabetes: A Patient's Guide

What is Diabetes?

An estimated 16 million people in the United States have diabetes mellitus, commonly known as "diabetes." Diabetes is a disorder where high levels of glucose (sugar) are in the blood because the body is not producing insulin or is not using insulin in the right way. Glucose is the main source of energy for the body. Insulin helps to remove sugar from the blood using it as fuel for energy or by storing it in the body's cells.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes?

You may be experiencing a change in how you are feeling and may have noticed the following signs and symptoms of diabetes:

- Always tired
- Very thirsty
- Hungry
- Urinating often, especially at night
- Losing weight without trying
- Blurry vision from time to time
- Very dry skin
- Sores that heal slowly
- More infections than usual
- Numbness and tingling of feet

During your visit to the doctor, you will receive a thorough medical history, physical examination, and blood tests to determine your blood sugar levels and what type of diabetes you have.

Types of Diabetes

- **Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus** – Your pancreas makes little or no insulin.
- **Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus** – Your pancreas makes insulin, but the amount is insufficient to keep your blood sugar within the normal range. Sometimes your body's cells don't allow for proper absorption/use of your blood sugar.
- **Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)** – This is a type of diabetes that only occurs during pregnancy. The body doesn't make enough insulin to keep up with the needs of your pregnancy, which causes high blood sugar. GDM occurs in 3 to 5 percent of all pregnancies (in other words, one in 20 pregnant women). It usually goes away when the baby is born. However, it means there is a higher risk of diabetes later in life.

What Happens When You Have Diabetes?

In people with diabetes, the pancreas either produces little or no insulin, or the body cells do not respond to the insulin that is produced. As a result, glucose builds in the blood, and overflows into the urine. The body is unable to use its main source of energy even though the blood contains large amounts of glucose. When there is not enough insulin in your blood, your body has to break down

fat for energy, and makes chemicals called ketones. Ketones can poison and even kill body cells. When your body doesn't have the help of insulin, the ketones build up in your blood and then spill over into your urine so your body can get rid of them. Ketones that build up in the body for a long time can lead to serious illness and coma.

How to Begin

You have diabetes. Your doctor cannot cure it for you. But there are things you can do to live longer and stay healthy. Start with small changes. You must make changes that will last for your whole life, not just for a little while. Choose foods and activities that you can live with every day. Seek information from your doctor or nurse, and use the resources listed in this brochure, to better understand the control and treatment of diabetes.

Get Help

Family and Friends

Tell your family, friends, or others who can help you that you have diabetes, and explain how they can reinforce your new lifestyle changes by:

1. Talking to you and your doctor to learn more about diabetes, and knowing what kinds of food you can eat and what meal plans are best for you.
2. Keeping sweets and high-fat foods out of the house, and learning to cook foods that are low in fat and sugars.
3. Reinforcing your exercise efforts by going for a walk or other exercise that you both enjoy.
4. Being patient. You may feel sad or angry about having diabetes. Until the blood sugar is under control, you may be grumpy or tired a lot.
5. Providing reinforcement when you eat right and exercise, and not nagging you when you have a minor set-back.
6. Helping make sure you get to doctor appointments.
7. Telling you they care about you. When people are given positive feedback, they will continue positive behaviors.

Support Groups

It helps to talk with other people who have diabetes, so you may want to join a support group. In a support group, you can learn from people who have lived with diabetes for a long time, talk about how to deal with diabetes, and discuss health concerns, food preparation, and exercise.

Counseling

Individual and family counseling sessions may help you deal with your diabetes. Ask your doctor to help you find a counselor who knows about diabetes and its care.

Become More Active

Move Around More

If you can become more active, you will feel better and you will control your blood sugar better. You will also be less likely to have problems that can cause blindness or loss of a foot or leg.

Start Slow

If you do not get any exercise now, talk to your doctor or nurse before you become active. Mild exercise – like walking, working in the garden, or even dancing – is a good way to start. Begin with a few minutes of activity each day. As you get stronger, add a few extra minutes.

Try to Be Active Every Day

It is better to walk for 10 to 20 minutes every day than for an hour once a week. If you feel pain, slow down or stop until the pain goes away. If it comes back, talk to your doctor or nurse before you exercise again.

Choose an Activity that You Enjoy

The more fun it is, the more likely you are to do it every day. Get a friend or family member to exercise with you.

If you are active now, and want to become more active, talk to your doctor or nurse about how much exercise will be safe for you and how much to eat before you exercise.

Understanding Medication

Insulin

- Helps your body use glucose as energy.
- Must be taken by shots (injections) under the skin, using a syringe or insulin pen. Insulin shots must be taken every day if you have Type 1 diabetes. You have to learn when to inject your insulin so it is working its hardest when you have the most glucose in your blood. Insulin takes a little time to start working, which is why you inject it before you eat. Your doctor will give you a plan on how much and when you should take your insulin.

Diabetes Pills

There are different kinds of pills you may take if you have Type 2 diabetes. Pills may:

- Help your body make more insulin.
- Help your body use insulin better.
- Slow down the digestion of sugars and starches (carbohydrates) so you don't get too much glucose at one time.
- Decreases the amount of sugar produced by your liver.

Be sure you know how and when to take your diabetes medication.

What Should Happen in Your Body When You Eat?

Food is digested into a simple sugar called glucose. After digestion, the glucose passes into your bloodstream for body cells to use for growth and energy. For the glucose to get into the cells, you need insulin. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas, a large gland behind the stomach. The pancreas is supposed to automatically produce the right amount of insulin to move the glucose from our blood into our cells.

Learn New Food Habits

How you eat is important. You will have to be careful how much you eat, when you eat, and what you eat. An individualized meal plan should be provided by your health care team. This plan will emphasize carbohydrate counting and portion control.

Eat Regular Meals

- To help keep your blood sugar within your normal range, you must eat three meals a day.
- Your dietitian may tell you to eat a snack in the afternoon and at bedtime.
- Try to eat at the same time each day.
- Drink water or diet drinks when you are thirsty. Avoid drinks that have sugar in them.

Learn New Ways to Cook

If you have favorite foods that are high in fat or sugar, ask your dietitian or nurse to help you find new ways to fix them.

Control Your Weight

Depending on your type of diabetes, you may have to lose weight. Ask your dietitian or nurse to help you set some weight goals.

Limit Alcohol

You can have an alcoholic drink once in a while, but you must ask your doctor how you can do so safely.

Pregnancy and Diabetes

Women with diabetes can have healthy babies, but it takes planning ahead and effort.

Pregnancy can:

- Cause more frequent high blood sugar levels.
- Cause more frequent low blood sugar levels.
- Make diabetic eye disease worse.
- Make diabetic kidney disease worse.

High glucose levels during pregnancy are dangerous for the baby, too.

Protecting Your Baby and Yourself

Keeping your glucose levels near normal before and during pregnancy can help protect you and your baby. That's why it's so important to plan your pregnancies ahead of time.

If you want to have a baby, discuss it with your doctor. Work with your doctor to keep your blood glucose in the normal range before you become pregnant. Make sure to get a complete check of your eyes and kidneys. Your glucose records and your hemoglobin A1c test results will show when you have maintained a safe range for a period of time.

To control your blood sugar, you may need to:

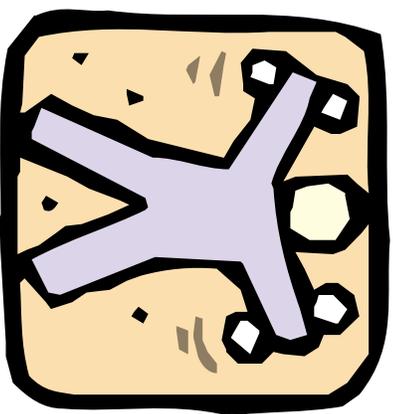
- Change your meal plan.
- Change your physical activity.
- Test your glucose frequently during the day.
- Take more frequent insulin shots.

Testing Your Blood Sugar

You can tell how well your diabetes care plan is working by testing your own blood sugar level with a drop of blood on a special strip from your pharmacy. Check your blood sugar every day before breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime. The ideal morning range can vary from 80 mg/dL to 120 mg/dL based on your particular needs. If you eat an evening snack, do your bedtime test before eating. The ideal range for bedtime is between 100 mg/dL to 140 mg/dL. You may also have to test yourself in the early morning or 2 hours after eating—it will depend on your doctor's instructions. Read your glucose number on the meter or match the color of the strip to the color chart. Write the date, time, and your blood glucose number on your log sheet. Take your log sheet with you every time you visit your doctor.

When you are sick or under unusual stress, test more often than usual. Specific directions are provided with the blood glucose monitoring system.

Exercise can help you control your weight, lower your blood glucose levels, and manage some of the long-term effects of diabetes. Physical activity can help prevent heart and circulation problems. It can also make you feel better, in general.



- Test your glucose level before you begin so you know whether you need a snack. Also, test after exercise so you know how exercise affects your glucose level.
- Bring along a source of sugar (like a sports drink or fruit juice) in case your blood glucose goes too low.
- Exercise when your glucose level is at its highest—1 to 3 hours after eating.
- Wait to exercise if ketones are present in your urine.
- Exercise with a friend or family member who knows something about diabetes.
- Wear an ID bracelet stating that you have diabetes.

Coping with diabetes can be stressful. Your emotional reaction to having diabetes—feelings such as anger, denial, fear, despair, and depression—can cause stress. You need to learn about what causes your stress so you can learn to manage it. Stress can make your blood sugar go up, and having high blood sugar levels can make you feel stressed. This can make it hard to keep your blood sugar in your target range.



How does stress affect blood sugar?

Stress affects the body's hormone balance, and these hormones can raise your blood sugar. You may also change the way you eat when under stress. Some people respond to stress with a flurry of nervous activity, which causes glucose levels to drop.

How do I know when stress affects me?

Test your blood glucose level several times a day during stressful situations. Call your doctor if the results are above your target range.

How can I control my stress?

- Be aware of changes in glucose levels that aren't caused by diet, exercise, or medication.
- Don't keep your emotions bottled up. Talk to a family member or friend.
- Join a diabetes support group.
- Reduce tension by relaxing; try yoga or meditation.
- Do deep breathing exercises.
- Take up a new hobby or pick up an old one.
- Learn what triggers the most stress for you and try to avoid those situations.
- Make some down time just for you—read, walk, garden, whatever you enjoy.
- Accept that you may not be able to do things as you did in the past.
- Avoid alcohol.

As you become aware of your stress levels, you will be able to distinguish between occasional sadness or anxiety unrelated to your blood sugar levels. When someone is depressed, however, they experience symptoms nearly every day for 2 or more weeks. Such persistent symptoms need to be discussed with your doctor.

Start with a little exercise. If you haven't been doing any physical activity, talk to your doctor before you begin. Walking, working in the yard, and dancing are good ways to start. As you become stronger, you can add a few extra minutes to your physical activity. If you feel pain, slow down or stop and wait until it goes away. If the pain comes back, talk to your doctor right away.

Do some physical activity every day. It's better to walk 10 or 20 minutes each day than one hour once a week.

Choose an activity you enjoy. The more fun it is, the more likely you will do it each day. It's also good to exercise with a family member or friend.

Diabetes can harm your eyes. People with diabetes may develop eye problems as a complication of the disease. Diabetic eye disease includes cataract, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy (when the small blood vessels in the retina deteriorate). Early detection and timely treatment of diabetic eye disease may reduce your risk of vision loss and blindness.

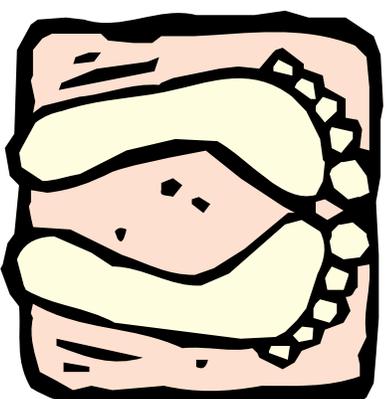


Signs of Trouble

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Blurry vision
- Flashes of light in your eyes
- Blind spots
- Color blindness
- "Things" floating in front of your eyes
- Any change at all in your eyesight

Your feet need special care. Nerve damage, circulation problems, and infections can cause serious foot problems for people with diabetes. Nerve damage can cause you to lose feeling in your feet. Sometimes nerve damage can lead to blisters, sores, or ulcers because of decreased sensation of pain. Poor circulation can make these injuries slow to heal.



Steps to Take if You Cut Your Foot

- Keep the cut clean.
- Watch for redness or soreness.
- Call your doctor if it has not healed in a few days. If you have a very bad cut, go to your doctor or to the emergency room right away.

Signs of Trouble

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Pain or swelling in your feet
- A cut or burn that does not heal in a few days
- A cut or burn that becomes red or sore
- A callous, a corn, or an ingrown toenail

The Do's and Don'ts of Foot Care

Do's

1. Exercise and eat right. Good blood flow helps you heal faster.
2. Check your feet every day for cuts, sores, blisters, or dry spots. Put lotion on dry spots.
3. Keep your feet clean. Wash your feet every day with mild soap. Dry your feet well and be sure to dry between your toes.
4. Cut your toenails straight across. Use clippers, not pointed scissors, and be careful not to cut the skin. If your toenails are very hard or thick, ask your doctor if a foot specialist should cut them for you.
5. Wear cotton socks to keep your feet dry and comfortable shoes to help your blood flow.
6. Shake your shoes before you put them on. Look and feel around for small, sharp objects.

Don'ts

1. Don't get burned. When you wash your feet, test the water with your elbow first. When your feet are cold, don't use a heating pad or hot-water bottle to warm them.
2. Don't cut corns or callouses.
3. Don't go barefoot.
4. Do not soak your feet.
5. Don't wear sandals.
6. Don't cut off blood flow to your feet. Tight hose or shoes, crossing your legs, or smoking can hurt blood flow.

The Do's and Don'ts of Eye Care

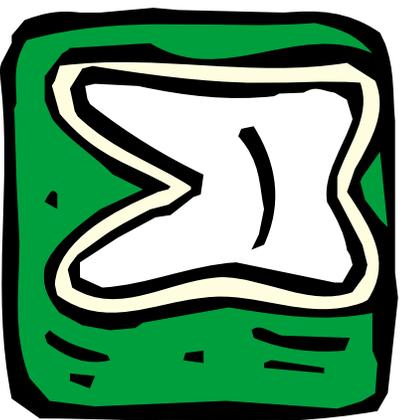
Do's

1. Keep your blood sugar under control. High blood sugar for many years can make the blood vessels in your eyes weak.
2. See the eye doctor once a year. Have an eye exam every year, even if your eyes are not bothering you.
3. Call your doctor right away if you have any eye problems. If your problems are caused by diabetes, getting help soon is important.

Don'ts

1. Don't smoke. Smoking can cause high blood pressure. That can make these types of eye problems worse in some people.
2. Don't miss your yearly eye exam. Go see the eye doctor once a year, even if your eyes are not bothering you. You may have a type of eye disease that doesn't show signs early.
3. Don't put off calling the doctor if you have problems. You may be afraid of what the doctor will find. But the sooner you go, the sooner you can get help if there is anything wrong. Waiting too long will only make things worse.

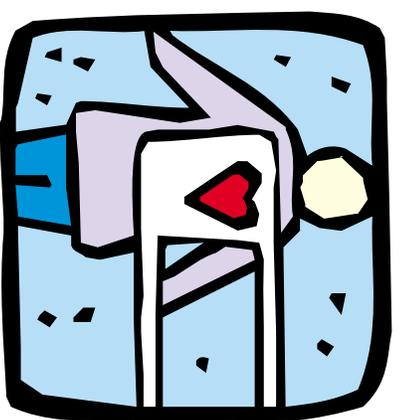
Because of high blood glucose, people with diabetes are more likely to have problems with their teeth and gums. There's a lot you can do to take charge and prevent these problems. Caring for your teeth and gums every day can keep them healthy. Keeping your blood glucose under control is also important.



- Signs of Dental Disease**
- Sore, swollen, and red gums that bleed when you brush your teeth are a sign of a dental problem called gingivitis.
 - Another problem, called periodontitis, happens when your gums shrink or pull away from your teeth.

Like all infections, dental infections can make your blood glucose go up. The good news is that, if your diabetes is well-controlled, you are probably at no greater risk for gum disease than anyone else. However, once you have a gum infection, it may take longer to clear up.

High blood sugar can cause problems with your heart by damaging the blood vessels. This is why people with diabetes are more likely to have heart disease. Luckily, there are things you can do to help prevent heart disease.



How You Can Help Keep Your Heart Healthy

You're less likely to have heart and blood flow problems if you:

- Control your blood sugar.
- Don't smoke.
- Control your high blood pressure.
- Lower the cholesterol in your blood.

When to Go to the Doctor

Make an appointment to see your doctor as soon as possible if:

1. Cramps or pain persists in the legs or feet.
2. Your blood pressure is more than the range indicated by your doctor.
3. You're short of breath after a little activity.
4. You have a lot of swelling in your feet.

The Do's and Don'ts of Heart Health

Do's

1. Check your blood pressure. Many drug stores have free blood pressure machines. If your blood pressure is more than 140/90, talk to your doctor about it.
2. Eat low-salt, low-fat foods to help keep your blood pressure and cholesterol down.
3. Get some exercise. It improves blood flow, lowers blood pressure, and can lower cholesterol.
4. Lose weight if you are too heavy. If you lose weight, your heart won't have to work so hard. Ask your doctor or dietitian for a plan to help you lose weight.
5. Relax. It will help keep your blood pressure and blood sugar under control.

Don'ts

1. Don't smoke. Smoking can raise your blood pressure and damage your blood vessels.
2. Don't drink. Alcohol can make your diabetes worse.
3. Don't eat fried foods. Cook only with liquid oils, not lard.
4. Don't forget to take your medicine. If you are on medication to lower your blood pressure or cholesterol, take it as your doctor tells you to.

Home Care

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss at least once a day.
- Be sure to brush before you go to sleep.
- Use a soft toothbrush and toothpaste with fluoride.
- Replace your toothbrush every 3 months.

Get Regular Dental Care

- See your dentist every 6 months. Tell your dentist you have diabetes and ask what you can do to keep your teeth and gums healthy.
- See your dentist right away if you have any signs of dental disease, including bad breath, a bad taste in your mouth, bleeding or sore gums, red or swollen gums, sore or loose teeth, or trouble chewing.
- Plan dental visits so they don't change the times you take your insulin and meals. Don't skip a meal or diabetes medicine before your visit. Right after breakfast may be a good time to schedule your appointment.

Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) is a blood glucose level lower than or equal to 70 mg/dL.

This low level can be caused by:

- Too much insulin
- Not enough food
- Unusual amount of exercise
- Delayed meal



Watch for:

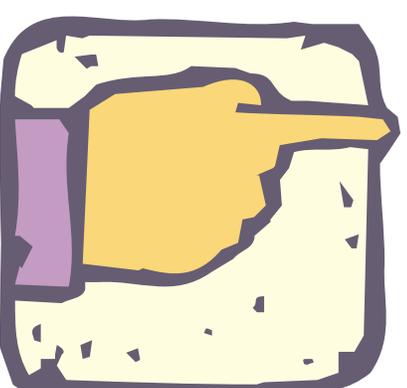
- Cold sweats, faintness, dizziness
- Headache
- Pounding of heart, trembling, nervousness
- Blurred vision
- Hunger
- Inability to awaken
- Grouchiness
- Personality change

Wear a diabetes alert bracelet and carry a card in your wallet or purse. A diabetes bracelet will let others know what is happening to you if you have low blood sugar. Be sure to tell your friends, family, and co-workers about low blood sugar signs and what to do. A person with low blood sugar may appear to be drunk. The bracelet and card will let people know what is happening.

High blood sugar (hyperglycemia) is a blood glucose level greater than or equal to 250 mg/dL.

This high level can be caused by:

- Not enough insulin
- Too much food
- Infection, fever, illness
- Emotional stress



Watch for:

- Increased thirst and urination
- Large amounts of sugar in the blood
- Ketones in urine
- Weakness, pains in stomach, aching all over
- Heavy, labored breathing
- Loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Weight loss or weight gain

Preventing High Blood Sugar

- Try to stay with your food and activity plan as much as possible.
- Take your diabetes medicine about the same time each day.
- Work with your doctor to set goals for weight, glucose level, and activity.

What to do:

- Take fluids without sugar if able to swallow.
- Test blood sugar frequently.
- Test urine for ketones.
- Call your doctor immediately if you don't already have instructions.

Special instructions from your doctor:

Over time, high blood sugar can damage body organs so you should keep your blood sugar under control as much as possible.

Preventing Low Blood Sugar

- Try to stay with your food and activity plan as much as possible.
- Take the correct amount of diabetes medicine about the same time each day.
- Work with your doctor to set goals for weight, glucose level, and activity.

What to do:

- If you think your blood sugar is low, test it to be sure. If your blood sugar is at or below 70 mg/dL, eat or drink one of the following to get 15 grams of carbohydrate:
 - 1/2 cup any fruit juice
 - 1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk
 - 4 teaspoons granulated white sugar
 - 1/3 cup regular soda
- Glucose gel or tablets (take the amount noted on the package to equal 15 grams of carbohydrate)

- Do not give insulin.
- Call the doctor.
- Tell family, friends, and co-workers if you become unconscious:
 - Do not give anything by mouth.
 - Have someone give glucagon if they are trained in how to administer it, and glucagon has been prescribed by your doctor.

Blood testing is the best way to find out your glucose level. The hemoglobin A1c test shows how your blood glucose levels have been over the past 3 to 4 months.

The hemoglobin A1c test measures how much glucose has been sticking to part of the hemoglobin in your red blood cells. Since each red blood cell is replaced by a new one every 4 months, the test shows how high the glucose levels have been during the life of the cells.



It is important to work out a sick day plan with your doctor before you get sick.

When you do get sick:

1. Do **NOT** stop taking your diabetes medicine. If you take insulin, adjust it as your doctor has told you.
2. Drink plenty of liquids, at least 1/2 cup to 1 cup every hour. Drink liquids with no calories—water is best, or diet soda or plain tea.
3. Eat your usual meal plan. If you can't, eat 15 grams of carbohydrate every hour such as:
 - 1/2 cup fruit juice
 - 1 cup chicken noodle soup
 - 6 saltine crackers
 - 1 cup skim milk
 - 1 slice toast
 - 1 cup yogurt (sugar-free)
4. Check your blood glucose every 4 hours.
5. Test for ketones in your urine.
6. Ask someone to check on you a few times a day.



Call your doctor if:

- 1. Your blood glucose is over 240 mg/dL for more than 48 hours.
- 2. Ketones are present in your urine.
- 3. You have been vomiting or have had diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- 4. You have been sick for 2 days and are not feeling any better.

Special instructions from your doctor:

Test Results

You should get a hemoglobin A1c test at least twice a year. If you take insulin, you should be tested four times a year. Use your test results to track and control your glucose levels.

Work with your doctor to set a "goal" reading for yourself.

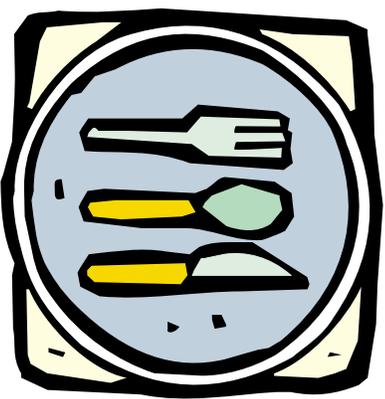
- If most of your recent blood glucose readings have been near normal—70 to 140 mg/dL, with the higher reading occurring after meals—the hemoglobin A1c test will be near normal (about 6 to 7%).
- If your readings are between 7 and 8%, you are in the fair range.
- If your readings are over 8%, you are out of control.

If your hemoglobin A1c is high, work with your doctor to adjust your:

- Balance of food
- Physical activity
- Diabetes medicine

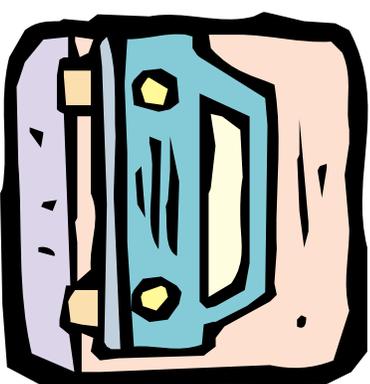
You can become an expert at choosing healthy foods from any restaurant menu.

- Choose low-fat items.
- Just because a restaurant serves a large portion doesn't mean you have to eat it all!
- Look for symbols on the menu that indicate light or heart-healthy items.
- Avoid alcohol. Choose calorie-free drinks such as water, diet soda, and tea.
- Make a crunchy raw vegetable salad and order dressing on the side. Skip the high-fat items at the salad bar such as cheese, sunflower seeds, bacon, avocado, and olives.
- Consider ordering a low-fat appetizer and a salad instead of an entrée.
- Skip fried foods. Choose entrées that are baked, broiled, roasted, grilled, steamed, or poached. Remove the skin from poultry and trim the fat from meat. Don't choose creamed, sautéed, or au gratin foods.
- Ask that foods, especially vegetables, be prepared without butter, cream sauces, or cheese.
- Fresh fruit or sherbet are good dessert choices. If you order a regular dessert, share it with everyone at your table.



Diabetes doesn't have to stop you from traveling, but you must take extra steps for a safe and relaxing trip.

- Carry your diabetes medication card and wear your diabetes alert bracelet.
- Stay as close as you can to your usual meal, exercise, and medication routines.
- Keep medications, insulin, syringes, glucagon, and blood-testing equipment handy (in your carry-on luggage if traveling by plane).
- Carry at least one week of extra supplies and a prescription for each item.
- Keep insulin at appropriate temperature (do not freeze) and away from heat and light.
- Protect test strips from extreme heat or cold.
- Keep food and some form of sugar handy.
- Plan ahead for changes in meal times (especially when crossing time zones).



- Plan times for testing your blood sugar.
- Ask your doctor about medicine for possible vomiting or diarrhea that's safe to take.
- Find out how and where to get emergency medical help where you will be traveling.
- Ask for a signed letter on your doctor's letterhead that explains your current treatment, any allergies and guidelines for treating other illnesses, and making adjustments in your treatment plan.

Important phone numbers when traveling:

Special instructions from your dietitian:

Test	Normal Range	My Goal	Date			
HgA1c	<7%					
LDL Cholesterol	<100 mg/dL					
HDL Cholesterol	>45 mg/dL					
Triglycerides	<400 md/dL					
Blood Pressure	<140/90					
Weight	Based on age					

Class/Reading/Video	Title	Date
	Meal Plan	
	Physical Activity Plan	
	Home Blood Sugar Testing Plan	
	Foot Care Plan	
	Medication Plan	
	Low/High Blood Sugar Treatment Plan	
	Sick Day Plan	
	Stress Management Plan	

We suggest you may want to visit www.healthfinder

My Diabetes Report Card

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

My Provider: _____

Emergency Contact Number: _____

You need to take control of your diabetes. Diabetes is treated with self-care. All patients with diabetes need to learn self-care management skills. You are the captain of the team. The provider cannot undo what the patient does not do.

Exam	Date	Date	Date	Date
Dilated Eye Exam				
Foot Exam				
Microalbuminuria				
Dental Exam				
Serum Creatinine				

Immunizations	Date	Date	Date	Date
Flu Shot				
Pneumonia Vaccine (generally once)				

If you don't know the answer to any of these questions, be sure to ask your doctor at your next visit:

1. How can I tell when my blood sugar is low and what do I do when it is?
2. How will tobacco or alcohol affect me?
3. What if I plan to get pregnant?
4. How can I deal with feeling depressed or low on energy?
5. How do I manage an infection? High fever?
6. What should I do if I have vomiting or diarrhea?

Be prepared to answer these questions at your next doctor's visit:

Have you had any of the following since your last appointment?

1. An ER or hospital visit?
2. Excessive thirst, hunger, or urination?
3. Vision changes?
4. Weight gain or loss?
5. Shakiness, rapid heart, confusion?
6. Blood sugar below 70?
7. Feet numbness or tingling?
8. Foot or skin ulcers?
9. Tooth or gum problems?

If you don't know the answer to any of these questions, be sure to ask your doctor at your next visit:

1. How can I tell when my blood sugar is low and what do I do when it is?
2. How will tobacco or alcohol affect me?
3. What if I plan to get pregnant?
4. How can I deal with feeling depressed or low on energy?
5. How do I manage an infection? High fever?
6. What should I do if I have vomiting or diarrhea?

Be prepared to answer these questions at your next doctor's visit:

Have you had any of the following since your last appointment?

1. An ER or hospital visit?
2. Excessive thirst, hunger, or urination?
3. Vision changes?
4. Weight gain or loss?
5. Shakiness, rapid heart, confusion?
6. Blood sugar below 70?
7. Feet numbness or tingling?
8. Foot or skin ulcers?
9. Tooth or gum problems?

Diabetes

Name	Amount	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

Blood Pressure

Name	Amount	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

Week Starting: _____

	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		Bedtime		Other	
	Blood sugar	Dose								
Mon										
Tue										
Wed										
Thu										
Fri										
Sat										
Sun										

Cholesterol and Triglycerides

Name	Amount	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

Other

Name	Amount	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

Week Starting: _____

	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		Bedtime		Other	
	Blood sugar	Dose								
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Week Starting: _____

	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		Bedtime		Other	
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Week Starting: _____

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Week Starting: _____

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Week Starting: _____

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Diabetes Checklist

Things to Do

1. Eat three meals a day and any snacks your dietitian recommends. Don't skip meals. Try to eat at about the same time each day.
2. Follow a low-fat, low-sugar diet.
3. Learn new ways to cook. If you have favorite foods that are high in fat or sugar, ask the dietitian or nurse to help you find new ways to fix them.
4. Maintain or lose weight according to your body size and doctor's instructions.
5. Drink water or diet soda when you are thirsty. Avoid drinks with sugar in them.
6. Limit alcohol. You can have an alcoholic drink once in a while, but you must ask your doctor how you can do so safely.
7. Exercise for 15 to 20 minutes every day: take the stairs, take a walk, sweep the house, mow the lawn, work in the garden, ride a bicycle, go for a swim, etc.
8. Take your medicine at the time you are supposed to. If you have a question about your medicine, call the nurse or doctor.
9. Check your feet. Are they blue? Do you have a cut or sore that isn't healing? Do you have pain or tingling in your feet? Do you have feeling in all of your toes?

Call your doctor or clinic if you see changes in your feet, your eyes, or anything about your health.

Things to Avoid

1. Avoid eating too much at one meal.
2. Don't skip meals or go too long without eating. Eat three meals each day, plus any snacks your dietitian recommends.
3. Avoid sweets and sugar.
4. Avoid fried foods or foods with a lot of fat.
5. Avoid alcohol.
6. Do not smoke.

Notes

Complications of Diabetes

Kidney Disease

Kidney disease is a serious problem for someone with diabetes. Our kidneys filter out the chemical wastes from our blood. Diabetes can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys.

- Damaged kidneys cannot filter the waste out of the blood.
- Waste will stay in the body and you will feel very sick.
- When your kidneys stop working, you must have your blood cleaned by a machine (this is called dialysis), or have a kidney transplant.

What you can do to care for your kidneys:

- Keep blood sugar within your target range, as per your management plan.
- Keep blood pressure less than 140/90.
- Do not smoke.
- Exercise regularly.
- Take your medicines.
- Talk to your doctor about the best way to control your diabetes and your blood pressure.
- Have a special urine test for microalbumin (a small protein) at least once a year.

Nerve Disease

Nerve disease (diabetic neuropathy) in people with diabetes lessens the ability of the nerves to carry messages to the brain and other parts of the body. Nerve damage happens to:

- People who have had diabetes for a long time
- People who don't control their blood sugar
- Men more often than women

Nerve disease can cause:

- Loss of strength and feeling in different parts of the body
- Inability of the heart to keep up with the needs of the body
- Inability of the intestines to digest food
- For men, inability to achieve an erection

You can avoid nerve disease by:

- Controlling your blood sugar.
- Eating healthy foods and avoiding foods that are high in fat and sugar.
- Losing weight if you are overweight.
- Exercising regularly.
- Take your medicines.
- Tobacco cessation

If you have the following signs, you may have nerve disease:

- Pain in your legs
- A feeling of lightheadedness that causes you to fall
- Diarrhea and constipation
- For men, failure to get an erection
- Numbness in your feet or toes
- Cuts or sores on your feet that do not heal

Testing for Nerve Disease

Nerve disease can happen slowly. In particular, you may not realize you are losing feeling in your feet.

- Ask your doctor to check your feet.
- At least once a year, your doctor should test how well you can sense temperature, pin prick, vibration, and movement of your feet.
- Keep track of your foot exam results.

Eye Disease

Diabetes can seriously damage your eyes and even cause blindness. In fact, every year in the United States there are over 10,000 cases of blindness caused by diabetes. The good news is that early identification and treatment of eye problems can help prevent blindness.

- If you have had diabetes for more than 10 years, it is likely that you have some eye damage.
- Over time, the many small blood vessels that line the inside of your eyes can be damaged by high blood sugar and high blood pressure. The damaged blood vessels are likely to break and bleed.
- Eye damage can be prevented by keeping blood sugar and blood pressure levels in the normal range.

Laser treatments and other surgical procedures can be used to treat damaged blood vessels and may be effective in stabilizing vision or reducing vision loss from diabetes.

Heart and Blood Vessel Disease

After years of having high blood sugar levels, you are more likely to get heart and blood vessel disease and develop it earlier in life. The effect is on the large blood vessels of the body. When high blood pressure, smoking, or high cholesterol is also present, there is an increase in the fatty deposits in the blood vessels, which may lead to total blockage.

- Damage to blood vessels in the heart can lead to heart attacks.
- Damage to blood vessels in the brain can lead to stroke.
- Damage to blood vessels in the large vessels of the leg can lead to calf pain and poor wound healing.

What you can do to prevent heart and blood vessel disease:

- Keep blood sugar within your target range, as per your management plan.
- Keep your blood pressure less than 140/90.
- Do not smoke.
- Control your cholesterol with diet and/or medication given to you by your doctor.
- Exercise regularly.
- Talk to your doctor about the best way to control your diabetes.

How to Prepare for Your Doctor Visit

Each Doctor Visit

To stay healthy and monitor your diabetes plan, you need to visit your doctor regularly:

1. Bring your blood glucose log sheet and go over the readings with your doctor.
2. Bring a list of questions or other things you need to talk about.
3. Bring a complete list of the prescription and over-the-counter drugs you take and show it to your doctor.
4. Have your weight checked.
5. Have your blood pressure checked.
6. Have your feet checked.
7. Get a hemoglobin A1c test (every 3 months if you take insulin and every 6 months if you take diabetes pills).
8. Discuss any issue you have that might prevent you from taking your medications (for example, side effects).

Yearly Doctor Visit

To stay healthy and monitor your diabetes plan, you need the following care at least once a year:

1. Flu shot
2. Pneumococcal pneumonia shot (one time)
3. Dilated eye exam
4. Foot exam, including a check of circulation and nerves
5. Kidney test:
 - Test urine for albumin
 - Measure blood creatinine
 - Get a 24-hour urine test if your doctor advises it
6. Blood cholesterol checked:
 - Total cholesterol
 - High-density lipoprotein (HDL)
 - Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)
 - Triglycerides
7. Dental exam (twice a year)

Notes

For More Information

The following patient resources will provide you with more detailed information on diabetes.

Organizations

American Diabetes Association

800-DIABETES (342-2383) for information about diabetes

The American Dietetic Association

800-366-1655 to speak with a dietitian, find a dietitian, or order free information

American Association of Diabetes Educators

800-TEAM UP4 (832-6874) for a 24-hour opportunity to speak with a diabetes educator

Educational Material

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

301-654-3327

Internet Resources

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease

www.niddk.nih.gov

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International

www.jdrf.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.htm

Department of Veterans Health Affairs

www.va.gov

Publications

"Diabetes Advisor" (bimonthly newsletter of the American Diabetes Association)

800-232-6733

***Diabetes Forecast* (monthly magazine, included with American Diabetes Association membership)**

800-806-7801

***Diabetes Self-Management* (monthly magazine)**

800-234-0923

This patient education brochure, prepared by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, is a product of the partnership initiative between DoD agencies and the Veterans Administration. It is not intended to take the place of expert medical care or treatment. Follow your doctor's advice if it differs from what is provided in this guide.

The recommendations that the guidelines present were derived from a consensus of expert opinion after an extensive review of the medical literature. The guidelines were also reviewed by medical specialists in the fields of adult and pediatric diabetes including physicians, nurses, registered dietitians, and diabetes educators from the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Portions of this brochure were adapted from the brochure, Controlling Diabetes One Day at a Time, Texas Diabetes Council, Texas Department of Health.



December 2000