

November is National Diabetes Prevention Month

Whether you have just learned you have diabetes or you have been living with diabetes for a while, it is important that you take care of yourself and prevent or delay some of the serious problems diabetes can cause. Here are four key steps to help you control your diabetes and live a long, active life.

Step 1: Learn About Diabetes

Diabetes means that your blood glucose (blood sugar) is too high. There are two main types of diabetes.

- [Type 1 diabetes](#) - the body does not make insulin. Insulin helps the body use glucose from food for energy. People with type 1 need to take insulin every day.
- [Type 2 diabetes](#) - the body does not make or use insulin well. People with type 2 often need to take pills or insulin. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes.
- [Gestational diabetes](#) - may occur when a woman is pregnant. Gestational diabetes raises her risk of getting another type of diabetes, mostly type 2, for the rest of her life. It also raises her child's risk of being overweight and getting diabetes.

Step 2: Know Your Diabetes ABCs

Talk to your health care team about how to manage your A1C (blood glucose or sugar), Blood pressure, and Cholesterol. This will help lower your chances of having a heart attack, a stroke, or other diabetes problems. Here's what the **ABCs** of diabetes stand for:

A for the A1C test

[The A1C Test](#) shows you what your blood glucose has been over the last three months. The A1C goal for most people is below 7. High blood glucose levels can harm your heart and blood vessels, kidneys, feet, and eyes.

B for Blood pressure

The goal for most people is 130/80.

[High blood pressure](#) makes your heart work too hard. It can cause [heart attack](#), [stroke](#), and [kidney disease](#).

C for Cholesterol

The LDL goal for most people is less than 100.

The HDL goal for most people is above 40.

LDL or "bad" cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. It can cause a [heart attack](#) or a stroke. HDL or "good" cholesterol helps remove cholesterol from your blood vessels.

Actions you could take:

Ask your health care team:

- o What your A1C, blood pressure, and Cholesterol numbers are
- o What should your **ABC** numbers should be
- o What you can do to reach your targets



Step 3: Manage Your Diabetes

Many people avoid the long-term problems of diabetes by taking good care of themselves. Work with your health care team to reach your ABC goals. Use this self-care plan.

- **Use your diabetes meal plan.** If you do not have one, ask your health care team about one.
 - **Make healthy food choices** such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, dry peas or beans, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese.
 - **Keep fish and lean meat and poultry portion to about 3 ounces** (or the size of a deck of cards). Bake, broil, or grill it.
 - **Eat foods that have less fat and salt.**
 - **Eat foods with more fiber** such as whole grains cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta.
- **Get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity** on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a great way to move more.
- **Stay at a healthy weight** by using your meal plan and moving more.
- **Ask for help if you feel down.** A mental health counselor, support group, member of the clergy, friend, or family member who will listen to your concerns may help you feel better.
- **Learn to cope with stress.** Stress can raise your blood glucose (blood sugar). While it is hard to remove stress from your life, you can learn to handle it.
- **Stop smoking.** Ask for help to quit.
- **Take medicines even when you feel good.** Ask your doctor if you need **aspirin** to prevent a [heart attack](#) or [stroke](#). Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your medicines or if you have any side effects.
- **Check your feet every day** for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Call your health care team right away about any sores that do not go away.
- **Brush your teeth and floss every day** to [avoid problems with your mouth, teeth, or gums](#)
- **Check your blood glucose (blood sugar).** You may want to test it one or more times a day. Use the card at the back of this booklet to keep a record of your blood glucose numbers. Be sure to take this record to your doctor visits.
- **Check your blood pressure** if your doctor advises.
- **Report any changes in your eyesight** to your doctor.

Step 4: Get Routine Care to Avoid Problems

See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early. Ask what steps you can take to reach your goals.

If you have diabetes,

- blood pressure check
- foot check
- weight check
- review of your self-care plan shown in Step 3

If you have diabetes, two times each year get:

- A1C test - it may be checked more often if it is over 7

If you have diabetes, once each year be sure you have a:

- cholesterol test
- triglyceride (try-GLISS-er-ide) test - a type of blood fat
- complete foot exam
- dental exam to check teeth and gums - tell your dentist you have diabetes
- dilated eye exam to check for eye problems
- flu shot
- urine and a blood test to check for kidney problems

If you have diabetes, at least once get a:

- Pneumonia (nu-mo-nya) shot

