

Tips to Help You Stay Healthy



Taking action to manage your diabetes can help you feel good today and stay healthy in the future.

Work with your doctor and other health care team members to make a diabetes care plan that works for you. Follow these four steps.

Step 1:

Learn About Diabetes

Diabetes means that your blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Diabetes is serious because it can damage your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves. But you can learn how to manage it and prevent or delay health problems.

- Take a class and join a support group about living with diabetes. Check with your health care team, hospital, or area health clinic.
- Read about diabetes online.
Go to www.YourDiabetesInfo.org.
- Ask your diabetes health care team how you can learn more.

Step 2:

Know Your Numbers

Ask your doctor what diabetes target numbers are best for you. They may be different from the numbers below.

- A1C measures your average blood glucose level over the past 2 to 3 months. The A1C target for many people is below 7.
- LDL, or bad cholesterol, builds up and clogs your arteries. The LDL target is below 100.
- High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. The blood pressure target for most people is less than 130/80.

Step 3:

Manage Your Diabetes

Your diabetes care plan should help you to:

- **Keep track of your diabetes numbers.**
- **Learn how and when to check your own blood glucose.**
 - See what makes your blood glucose go up or down.
 - Go over the test results with your health care team. Use them to manage your diabetes.
 - Ask how to prevent low blood glucose.
- **Be active for 30 to 60 minutes** on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a great way to be active.
- **Stop smoking.**
Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
- **Eat healthy foods such as:**
 - fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats and poultry, dried peas or beans, lentils, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese
 - whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread and crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, and cereals
 - food prepared with little added fat, oil, salt, or sugar
 - smaller servings of meat, fish and poultry
 - larger servings of fruits and vegetables.

- **Seek help if you feel down.** Talking with a counselor, friend, family member, support group, or a religious leader may help you feel better.
- **Take your medicines even when you feel good.** Ask if you need to take low-dose aspirin to prevent a heart attack or stroke.
- **Check your feet every day.** Call your health care team if a cut, sore, blister, or bruise on your feet or toes does not begin to go away after 2 days.
- **Brush your teeth and floss every day** to prevent problems with your mouth, teeth, or gums.
- **Tell your health care team if your eyesight changes.**

Step 4: Get Regular Care

- Contact your health care team if you have any questions or problems as you manage your diabetes, medicines, or supplies.
- Use “My Diabetes Care Record” on the last page to track your diabetes numbers and checkups with your doctor or health care team.
- Talk to your doctor if you plan to get pregnant.
- Ask what diabetes services are covered by Medicare and other insurance. To learn more about Medicare go to: bit.ly/mc-diabetes.

Set goals you can reach. Break a big goal into small steps. Maybe you could start with a goal to walk half a mile each day. Then increase the distance each week or so until you are walking two or more miles each day. Give yourself a healthy reward for doing well.

Take action to be healthy and control your diabetes for life. Write down: *One or more reasons I have to manage my diabetes:*

One or more things I will work on over the next 3 months to carry out my diabetes care plan:

People who can help me do these things are:



HHS' NDEP is jointly sponsored by NIH and CDC with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org
 or **1-888-693-NDEP**
(1-888-693-6337)
TTY: 1-866-569-1162

Sandra Parker, R.D., C.D.E., American Dietetic Association representative to the NDEP, reviewed this material for technical accuracy.

The NDEP prints on recycled paper with bio-based ink.

Revised February 2011
 NIH Publication No. 11-4351
 NDEP-8

My Diabetes Care Record

	Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result
Each visit						
Blood pressure My target is:						
Foot check						
Review self-care plan						
Weight check My target is:						
At least twice a year						
A1C: My target is:						
Once a year						
Cholesterol-LDL My target is:						
Complete foot exam						
Dental exam						
Eye exam (with drops in your eyes)						
Flu Shot						
Kidney check						
At least once						
Pneumonia shot						