



## A Publication of the Presbytery of West Virginia



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**Get Answers About  
Diabetes...**

**Call 1-800-DIABETES  
(1-800-342-2383)**

Or click on the "chat with  
us" icon at [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)

Or e-mail questions in  
English  
to [askADA@diabetes.org](mailto:askADA@diabetes.org)  
or in Spanish to  
[preguntas@diabetes.org](mailto:preguntas@diabetes.org).

### Free Clinics

All the state's 11 free clinics offer diabetes services, some more extensively than others. Health Right clinics provide free services to people who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to buy health insurance. To locate a free clinic, visit [www.wvaafc.org](http://www.wvaafc.org)

## Diabetes and the Older Adult

Diabetes disproportionately affects older adults.

Approximately 25% of Americans over the age of 60 have diabetes, and aging of the U.S. population is widely acknowledged as one of the drivers of the diabetes epidemic.

Although the burden of diabetes is often described in terms of its impact on working-aged adults, the disease also affects longevity, functional status, and risk of institutionalization for older patients.

**What is Type 2 diabetes?**

When you eat, your food is broken down into a sugar called glucose. Glucose gives your body the energy it needs to work. But to use glucose as energy, your body makes insulin, which "unlocks" your body's cells so they can receive the glucose they need. When you have type 2 diabetes, your body does not make enough insulin or use it well. This means your cells can't use the glucose as energy, so the glucose stays in your blood. Having high blood glucose can cause problems like eye, kidney, nerve, and foot disorders. People with diabetes are also at higher risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and other serious conditions. There is no cure for diabetes, but it can be managed. Balancing the food you eat with exercise and medicine (if prescribed) will help you control your weight and can keep your blood glucose in the healthy range. This can help prevent or delay diabetes complications. As people get older,



"I try to eat healthy. I never sprinkle salt on ice cream, I only eat decaffeinated pizza and my beer is 100% fat free."

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their risk for type 2 diabetes increases. In fact, in the United States about one in four people over the age of 60 has diabetes. If you already have diabetes, you may find that you need to adjust how you manage your condition as the years go by.

Many people with diabetes live long and healthful lives. Your diabetes care team will help you take care of your diabetes, but day-to-day diabetes care is up to you. Day-to-day care includes:

- Choosing what, how much, and when to eat
- Getting active
- Checking your blood glucose (if your doctor tells you to)
- Taking medicine (if your doctor prescribes it)
- Quitting smoking
- Going to your medical appointments



## Here are some ways to stay healthy with diabetes:

- Find out your average blood glucose level. At least twice a year, get the A1C blood test. The result will show your average glucose level for the past 3 months.
- Watch your blood pressure. Get your blood pressure checked often.
- Check your cholesterol. At least once a year, get a blood test to check your cholesterol and triglyceride levels. High levels may increase your risk for heart problems.
- Stop smoking. Smoking raises your risk for many health problems, including heart attack and stroke.
- Have yearly eye exams. Finding and treating eye problems early may keep your eyes healthy.
- Check your kidneys yearly. Diabetes can affect your kidneys. A urine and blood test will show if your kidneys are okay.
- Get flu shots every year and the pneumonia vaccine. A yearly flu shot will help keep you healthy. If you're over 65, make sure you have had the pneumonia vaccine. If you were younger than 65 when you had the pneumonia vaccine, you may need another one. Ask your doctor.
- Care for your teeth and gums. Brush your teeth and floss daily. Have your teeth and gums checked twice a year by a dentist to avoid serious problems.
- Protect your skin. Keep your skin clean and use skin softeners for dryness. Take care of minor cuts and bruises to prevent infections.
- Look at your feet. Take time to look at your feet every day for any red patches. Ask someone else to check your feet if you can't. If you have sores, blisters, breaks in the skin, infections, or build-up of calluses, see a foot doctor, called a podiatrist.

That pill is for your heart  
that one is for your eyes  
that one is for blood pressure  
That's for diabetes  
that's a blood thinner  
That is for cholesterol  
That's for dizziness

What's for  
dessert?

