



MANAGING DIABETES



You can take control.

Diabetes can affect many aspects of your life and can cause serious health problems over time. The good news is, you can help keep your diabetes under control. It can be easier than you might think and, best of all, you have help along the way. Here are some simple tips to help you take charge of your health.



1. Take advantage of a full care team.¹

In addition to a primary care doctor, you can leverage a full health care team for a more complete approach to maintaining your health.

- › **Endocrinologist**
- › **Dietitian, a nurse, or a certified diabetes educator**
- › **Counselor or mental health professional**
- › **Pharmacist**
- › **Dentist**
- › **Ophthalmologist or optometrist for eye care**
- › **Podiatrist**

To make the most of your visits:

- › Make a list of questions beforehand.
- › While you're there, ask about what immunizations you need to keep from getting sick. Preventing illness is an important part of taking care of your diabetes.
- › Before you leave your appointment, be sure you understand everything you need to know about taking care of your diabetes.



2. Adopt a healthy eating plan.²

Your doctor can connect you with a dietitian who has experience with healthy eating plans geared toward people with diabetes. Although healthy eating plans will vary depending on whether or not you take insulin, the overall intention is not to be restrictive (e.g., cutting out carbs completely). It's about learning how to eat the right amounts of the right foods, including a healthy balance of all major food groups.

- › **Breads, cereals, rice and whole grains**
- › **Fruits and vegetables**
- › **Meat and meat substitutes**
- › **Dairy products**
- › **Healthy fats**

Some foods and drinks you should limit include:

- › Fried foods and foods high in saturated and trans fat.
- › Foods high in salt, also called sodium.
- › Sweets, such as baked goods, candy and ice cream.
- › Beverages with added sugars such as juice and regular soda.

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3. Be physically active.²

Being physically active is especially important if you have diabetes. When combined with healthy eating, it can help keep blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol in check.

Adults should aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity at least five days of the week. If you want to lose weight, you may need to do 60 minutes or more of physical activity five days of the week.

Keep in mind that every little bit can help and not all physical activity has to take place at the same time. So you can break it up throughout your day.

Physical activity should consist of:

- › Aerobic activities, such as brisk walking.
- › Strength exercises two to three times a week, such as lifting hand weights.
- › Stretching to increase flexibility, lower stress, and help prevent muscle soreness after physical activity.

Always talk with a doctor before starting a new exercise program.



4. Monitor your diabetes.³

With a blood glucose meter, you can easily check and record your blood glucose levels right at home. Depending on your levels, you'll be able to tell if you're on the right track to manage your diabetes.

Your doctor will tell you:

- › How to use your meter.
- › When and how often to use it.
- › What your target blood glucose level is.



5. Take your medicines as prescribed.⁴

If a healthy eating plan and physical activity are not enough to lower blood glucose levels, medicines may help. Diabetes medicines come in pill and shot form. The amount and frequency will be determined by your doctor. People who take diabetes medicines may also need insulin shots for a while.

Insulin methods

There are multiple ways to take insulin. Your doctor will help you determine which of the following is best for you.

- › **Shot** – A needle attached to a syringe – a hollow tube with a plunger – that you fill with a dose of insulin. Some people use an insulin pen, a pen-like device with a needle and a cartridge of insulin.
- › **Pump** – A small device filled with insulin that you wear on your belt or keep in your pocket. The pump connects to a small, plastic tube and a small needle. You or your doctor will insert the needle under your skin. The needle can stay in for several days.
- › **Jet injector** – A device that sends a fine spray of insulin through your skin with high-pressure air instead of a needle.
- › **Injection port** – A small tube that is inserted just beneath your skin, where it remains in place for several days. Insulin is injected into the end of the tube instead of through your skin.
- › **Inhaler** – Another way to take insulin is by breathing powdered insulin from an inhaler device into your mouth. Inhaled insulin is only for adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Have questions or concerns about your diabetes risk?

Talk with your doctor, who can make the appropriate recommendations based on your health history.

Sources:

1. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. "Managing Diabetes." <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes> (November 2016)

2. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. "Diabetes Diet, Eating and Physical Activity." <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/diet-eating-physical-activity> (November 2016)

3. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. "Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers: Use Them to Manage Your Diabetes." <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes/know-blood-sugar-numbers> (March 2016)

4. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. "Insulin, Medicines & Other Diabetes Treatments." <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/insulin-medicines-treatments> (November 9, 2016)

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