Checking Blood Sugar

The first step in managing diabetes is to monitor the level of glucose in your blood. Monitoring your blood sugar every day helps you make daily decisions about your diabetes management. Monitoring isn’t hard to do. If you don’t know, ask your diabetes team to show you how to use a blood glucose meter.

Using a Blood Glucose Meter

You can check your blood sugar at home, at work, and anywhere else. Ask your diabetes team to help you select a blood glucose meter and monitor your blood sugar.

Aim for Your Target Range

Your range is based on your personal factors and reduces your risk for complications. Your target range should be in this range as often as possible. Staying in this range helps you feel your best.

Checking Your Blood Sugar

Checking your blood sugar with today’s meters is simple it is to test yourself with a blood glucose meter and monitor your blood sugar.

Print. Print out materials that can help you manage your heart disease. To use this feature, install the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (http://get.adobe.com/reader/)

Audio. Listen to the audio version of the information on the pages you are viewing. Audio buttons will launch a control bar at the bottom of the screen. Use it to play, pause, and resume the audio. It will also feature a progress bar.

Print. Print this PDF for step-by-step instructions on checking blood sugar.

Check your blood sugar at home, at work, and anywhere else. Ask your diabetes team to select a blood glucose meter. The meter measures the amount of sugar in your blood. You’ll use a lancet to draw a tiny drop of blood. The drop is placed on a small strip that goes into the meter. The meter then gives you a reading that tells you the levels of glucose in your blood. This will help you make daily decisions about your diabetes management.

Play. Play videos and animations by pressing the play button that sits on or near the images. Some may only have a progress bar. Use it to play, pause, and resume the audio.

Bold Green Text. Move your mouse cursor over any bold text (in green) and a definition of the word will pop up.

Quiz. At the end of each chapter there is a quiz to help you find out how much you have learned. Click the question mark icon to launch the quiz in a separate window.

Help. Move your cursor to the top or bottom of the page. A menu bar will appear. Click the icons to reveal a list of options, including help.

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This product is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Only your doctor can diagnose and treat a medical problem.
CHAPTER 1: Getting Started, Learning More
3 Understanding Diabetes
4 Why High Blood Sugar Is a Problem
6 Living Life with Diabetes
10 You’re In Charge

CHAPTER 2: Monitoring Your Blood Sugar
11 Checking Blood Sugar
12 How the A1C Test Helps
14 Treating Low and High Blood Sugar
16 Make Checking a Priority

CHAPTER 3: Creating a Meal Plan
17 Making a Plan for Healthy Eating
18 Healthy Eating for Weight Control
20 How Carbohydrates Affect Blood Sugar
21 Learn About Carb Counting
22 Planning Your Meals
24 Eating Away from Home
26 Notes for Family and Friends

CHAPTER 4: Adding Activity into Your Life
27 Getting Active
28 Sticking with It
30 Overcoming Roadblocks

CHAPTER 5: Taking Medications
33 Medications for Diabetes
34 If You Need to Use Injections
36 Taking Other Medications
38 Managing Your Medications
40 Your Medication Plan

CHAPTER 6: Maintaining Your Overall Health
41 Caring for Your Emotional Health
44 Managing Cardiovascular Risk Factors
45 Staying Healthy
46 Reducing Your Risk for Complications
48 Quitting Smoking
50 Diabetes and Intimacy
51 On the Road
52 When You’re Sick
54 Notes for Family and Friends

CHAPTER 7: Resources and Glossary
55 Resources
56 Glossary
You Can Live Well with Diabetes!

Diabetes is a **chronic**, or lifelong, condition. It takes work to manage, and it’s not always easy. But it can be done! This workbook will help you get started. It can help as you make daily decisions to manage your diabetes. It will give you tips and tools you can use to live a healthier life.

What Is Diabetes?

When you have diabetes, your body has trouble using a sugar called **glucose**. As a result, the sugar level in your blood becomes too high. Over time, high blood sugar leads to health problems throughout the body. Anyone can develop diabetes. It can affect people of all ages and backgrounds. But there are some common risk factors for diabetes. These include:

- Family history of diabetes
- Lack of physical activity
- Being overweight
- Being older than age 40
- Being African American, Native American, Hispanic, Asian American, Asian Indian, or Pacific Islander

How this Workbook Can Help

This workbook is full of tools and tips to help you create a diabetes management plan and take control of your health. Use the chapters to learn skills and set goals. Share the information with your healthcare provider and your loved ones. Use it whenever you need to, now and in the future.
CHAPTER 1
Getting Started, Learning More

You may have had diabetes for a while. Or you may have just learned you have it. Know that you don’t have to learn everything about diabetes care all at once. You can take it step by step. This workbook can help. Also know that you don’t have to go it alone. Your healthcare providers can help teach you what you need to know. It’s up to you to put what you learn into practice. You CAN do it!
Understanding Diabetes

The body takes glucose from food and burns it for energy. A hormone called **insulin** is needed to help the body use glucose. With diabetes, the body doesn’t make enough insulin. Or the body cannot use the insulin it makes. Either way, glucose builds up in the bloodstream.

How the Body Gets Energy

The digestive system breaks food into the sugar glucose. Most of this glucose is sent into the bloodstream. Glucose travels to cells to be used as fuel for the body. The pancreas makes the hormone insulin, which allows glucose to enter the cells. Think of insulin as a key. When insulin reaches a cell, it unlocks a doorway in the cell wall. This creates an opening that allows glucose to enter the cell.

A healthy balance of insulin and glucose circulates in the bloodstream.

1. Glucose from food enters the bloodstream.
2. Insulin enters the bloodstream from the pancreas.
3. Insulin binds to a cell that needs energy.
4. Insulin opens the cell to glucose.
5. Glucose enters the cell and is used for fuel.
Type 1 Diabetes

With type 1 diabetes, the pancreas is not making any insulin at all. Type 1 diabetes most often is diagnosed in children. But adults at any age can also develop it. People with type 1 must take insulin every day to allow the body to use glucose for fuel.

Type 2 Diabetes

With type 2 diabetes, the pancreas may still make insulin, but the cells don’t unlock in response to insulin the way they should. This is called insulin resistance. The pancreas may try to overcome resistance by making more insulin. This helps for a while, but in time the pancreas cannot make the amount of insulin the body needs. People with type 2 diabetes may or may not need to take insulin.

When You Have Diabetes

Diabetes is a problem with insulin. Your body may make too little insulin or none at all. Or your cells may not respond the right way to insulin. Either way, this means that glucose has trouble entering the cells to be used for fuel. If it can’t enter the cells, it builds up to a harmful level in the bloodstream. This is called high blood sugar, or hyperglycemia. The buildup of sugar in the blood also means that your cells become starved for fuel. There are two types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

With type 1 diabetes, there is no insulin in the bloodstream. As a result, glucose can’t enter cells and builds up in the blood.

With type 2 diabetes, glucose can’t enter cells easily, so glucose builds up in the bloodstream.
Why High Blood Sugar Is a Problem

Over time, too much sugar in the blood damages blood vessels, both large and small. This damage leads to complications that affect the whole body. Diabetes is especially hard on the heart. If you have diabetes, your risk for diseases of the heart and blood vessels is much higher than someone without diabetes. However, you can control this risk. By managing diabetes and keeping blood sugar at a healthy level, you can help protect your body and your future.

Diabetes Can Affect the Whole Body

Diabetes and high blood sugar can lead to problems through the whole body. The most common problems are:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Nerve damage, called neuropathy
- Eye disease, called retinopathy
- Kidney problems, called nephropathy
- Problems with arousal and erections
- Leg and feet problems, called Peripheral arterial disease or P.A.D.
Diabetes and the Heart

Having diabetes and high blood sugar raise a person’s risk for developing cardiovascular disease, known as heart and blood vessel disease. Cardiovascular disease can lead to problems with the blood vessels that include heart attack or stroke.

High Blood Sugar Damages Artery Walls

The buildup of glucose in the blood affects the lining of artery walls. An artery is a type of blood vessel. A vein is an example of another type. Arteries carry blood from the heart to the rest of the body. When arteries are healthy, the lining is smooth. But when you have high blood sugar, the artery lining becomes damaged over time. This allows the buildup of plaque, fatty materials such as cholesterol, in the arteries.

How Heart Attack and Stroke Happen

The buildup of plaque narrows arteries. This means that any blockage, such as a blood clot, can cut off blood flow. When this happens, heart attack and stroke can occur. Many people with diabetes also have other cardiovascular risk factors, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol. These problems increase the chance of heart attack or stroke even further. But managing your risk factors, including your blood sugar, can help delay or prevent these problems.
Living Life with Diabetes

You know that managing diabetes can help you stay healthy and live your life. Still, some people find that daily diabetes management feels like a lot to handle. It affects daily routine at home, school, and work. Change isn’t always easy. But with practice, managing your diabetes can become part of your life. Your healthcare team is there to support you. People in your life can help support you, too.

Acknowledge Your Feelings

Hearing that you have diabetes can be a shock. You may feel sad, guilty, or even afraid. These feelings, sometimes called diabetes distress, are natural and understandable. Give yourself time to adjust to the news and to the changes that the diagnosis will bring. Know that your feelings will likely improve with time and as you learn more about caring for yourself. Talk to your healthcare team about how you’re feeling. They can help you feel less overwhelmed and more ready to plan for a healthy future.

Recognizing Depression

Many people feel sad or down when they first hear that they have diabetes. Feelings like these are normal. But frequent feelings of helplessness or hopelessness are a symptom of depression. Depression is a serious problem, but it can be treated. If you feel overwhelmed, or if you are having trouble sleeping or eating, talk to your healthcare provider. Don’t wait!
Get Support!

Managing your blood sugar is mostly up to you. But you don’t have to go it alone. A team of healthcare experts will help you learn strategies to manage diabetes and the health risks it brings. Think about what kind of help you will need. Then, ask for support from your family and friends.

Your Healthcare Team

Your diabetes healthcare team will work with you to create a management plan. Team members may include:

- A **primary care provider**, often your regular doctor, who can refer you to specialists as needed.
- An **endocrinologist**, a doctor who specializes in diabetes.
- A **registered dietitian**, an expert in nutrition, to teach you about food choices that help you meet your goals.
- A **diabetes educator**, often a nurse, to teach you how to manage and live with diabetes.
- A **health psychologist or social worker**, to help you with the emotional aspects of managing your condition.
- A **pharmacist**, who fills your prescriptions and explains your medications.

Your Family and Friends

Family and friends can support your efforts to take care of your health. They may be concerned about your condition and worried about complications. Or, it may be hard for them to understand all the changes you are making. But the important people in your life can help you succeed. People who care about you want to help. Think about the people who can support you, and the specific ways they can help. Then ask for the support you need. Your family and friends can help you stay focused and confident as you learn to manage diabetes.
You’re In Charge

Your healthcare team may be experts on diabetes, but you are the expert on you. No one else can manage your blood sugar for you. So work closely with your healthcare team to create a management plan that you can stick with. Remember: As your life changes, your plan will need to change, too. In fact, anytime your plan isn’t working as intended, talk to your healthcare team about making changes. This can help to protect your health, now and in the future.

Designing a Management Plan

The rest of this workbook focuses on what you’ll need to create your diabetes management plan. It gives you information, tips, and tools you can use every day. Print the PDFs and fill them out with your healthcare provider to set target goals. Share them with family and friends. You’ll also find a glossary of diabetes terms and resources for learning more about diabetes management.

Reasons to Manage Your Diabetes

Managing diabetes can be challenging. But making the effort is worth it for your health and your future. Below are just a few of the benefits. Can you think of any more?

- Have more energy and a sense of well-being
- Miss fewer days of work, school, or other regular activities
- Feel more in control
- Reduce your risk for serious complications
Chapter 1 Quiz

Congratulations!

You've just finished Chapter 1. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 2
Monitoring Blood Sugar
CHAPTER 2

Monitoring Your Blood Sugar

Monitoring your blood sugar is the basis of diabetes management. In this chapter, you will learn:

• The importance of checking your blood sugar.
• How to know if your treatment plan is keeping your blood sugar where you want it to be.
• What to do when your blood sugar is too high or too low.
Checking Blood Sugar

The first step in managing diabetes is learning to check, or monitor, the level of glucose in your blood. This will help you make daily decisions about diabetes management. Monitoring isn’t hard to do. If you don’t know, ask your diabetes team to show you how. Keep a record of your numbers, also called readings. This shows how food, activity, stress, and medication affect your blood sugar every day.

Using a Blood Glucose Meter

You can check your blood sugar at home, at work, and anywhere else. Ask your diabetes team to help you select a blood glucose meter. This meter measures the amount of glucose in your blood. You’ll use a lancet to draw a tiny drop of blood. The drop is placed on a small strip that goes into the meter. The meter then gives you a reading that tells you the level of your blood sugar. With today’s meters, you can test just about anywhere you go.

Aim for Your Target Range

Your diabetes team will help you figure out your ideal target range. Your blood sugar should be in this range as often as possible. Staying in this range helps you feel your best and reduces your risk for complications. Your range is based on your personal factors and goals. Keep your target range in mind when managing your blood sugar reading.
Track Your Readings

Every time you check your blood sugar, track your readings. Your management plan will outline how often you should check. Some people should check four times a day, others less often. Be sure to write down all your numbers. Use your log to record things that might have affected your blood sugar. This may include being sick, being very active, being stressed, or eating special foods on a holiday. Use the following sample to help you fill out your sugar log.

### Sample Blood Sugar Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Nighttime (if needed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>2 hours after</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>2 hours after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>7 am 144</td>
<td>9 am 185</td>
<td>12 pm 124</td>
<td>2 pm 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What Do the Readings Mean for You?**

Keeping track of your blood sugar readings helps you identify patterns. These patterns may mean your plan needs adjusting to keep your blood sugar in your target range. Be sure to take your log book with you every time you see your healthcare provider. And be honest! There are no “good” or “bad” numbers. The readings just tell you if you need to make changes in order to protect your health.
How the A1C Test Helps

You use a meter to track your blood sugar every day. But you also need to know if your treatment plan is keeping you healthy over time. An A1C test can help. This test measures your average blood sugar level over a few months. If your level stays too high, your treatment plan may need to be adjusted.

Your A1C Goal

An A1C, test result can be reported as a percentage. It can also be reported as a number, called an estimated Average Glucose or eAG. Your healthcare provider will help you figure out your target goal. Most people aim for an A1C lower than 7%. This is an eAG of less than 154 mg/dL. Your goal will depend on your age, general health, and other factors. An A1C that is close to target means that your blood sugar is well-controlled.

The A1C Test

The A1C, also called a glycated hemoglobin test, is a blood test. It measures how much glucose is stuck to a protein, called hemoglobin, inside the red blood cells. You will likely have an A1C test every 3 to 6 months. Talk with your healthcare provider to schedule an A1C. And don’t forget to follow up on the results.

A higher A1C test result means you have a greater risk for developing complications.

A normal A1C result means that a healthy amount of glucose is inside red blood cells.

A high A1C result means that too much glucose is inside red blood cells.
Treating Low and High Blood Sugar

Many things can raise or lower blood sugar. Food, exercise, medications, stress, and illness are some factors. Extreme highs and lows can be dangerous! But very high or low blood sugar may or may not always cause obvious symptoms. This is why checking blood sugar is so vital. Ask your healthcare provider to tell you what blood sugar numbers you should watch out for.

Low Blood Sugar

Hypoglycemia means low blood sugar. Blood sugar that is lower than 70 needs to be treated. A drop in blood sugar can happen very quickly. You might have:

- Sweating or cold, clammy skin.
- Dizziness, shakiness, or a tingling feeling.
- Headache or a hard, fast heartbeat.
- Confusion or irritability.

If you experience episodes of severe hypoglycemia, your healthcare provider may tell you to raise your target blood sugar.

If You Feel Symptoms

Always check your blood sugar right away. If it is lower than 70:

1. Eat or drink 15 to 20 grams of fast-acting sugar. This could be 4 glucose tablets or ½ cup (4 oz) of fruit juice. (No diet soda!)
2. Check your blood sugar again after 15 minutes. If it’s still low, repeat step 1. Check again after another 15 minutes. If it returns to normal, eat a snack or meal to keep your blood sugar in a safe range. If it’s still too low, continue to treat it and call your healthcare provider right away.

High Blood Sugar

Hyperglycemia means that your blood sugar may be around 200 or higher. You might experience:

- Increased thirst.
- Increased need to urinate.
- Increased tiredness.
- Blurred vision.

If You Feel Symptoms

Always check your blood sugar right away. If it’s too high:

1. Drink water or other sugar-free liquids to stay hydrated.
2. If you take insulin, you may need to increase your dose or take an extra dose. Ask your healthcare provider for instructions.
3. Check at least every 4 hours to make sure your blood sugar is going down. Call your healthcare provider if it doesn’t go down after 2 checks, or if symptoms get worse.

Ask your healthcare team what symptoms indicate a blood sugar emergency.
Overcoming Barriers

Are you checking your blood sugar as often as you planned? If not, what’s stopping you? Be specific. For each barrier, think of a solution that you can stick with. Print out this PDF and write it down in the space provided. Then refer back to this chart whenever you need a reminder.

Example:

Change I want to make: *Remember to test my blood sugar 2 hours after eating.*

What’s stopping me: *I forget when I get too busy at work.*

Ways to improve: *Set an alarm to go off when I need to check my blood sugar. Or, pick an activity I do every day and always check at that time, such as during a break.*
Congratulations!

You’ve just finished Chapter 2. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 3
Creating a Meal Plan
CHAPTER 3

Creating a Meal Plan

The food you eat plays a big role in managing diabetes. In this section, you will learn:

• The importance of choosing foods for blood sugar and weight control.
• How different foods affect blood sugar levels.
• How to create a meal plan and put it into action.
• How to stick to your meal plan away from home.
Making a Plan for Healthy Eating

A key part of managing blood sugar is a plan for healthy eating. This plan helps you do two things. It helps control your blood sugar by balancing food with medication and activity. It also helps you manage your weight and lose weight if needed. Ask to meet with a registered dietitian. A dietitian is an expert on food and nutrition. The dietitian will teach you the skills you need to plan healthy meals.

Working with a Dietitian

You may work with a dietitian one-on-one or in a group class. The dietitian will help you design a meal plan. This plan will be based on your likes and dislikes and your needs. The dietitian will help you learn how the foods you eat affect blood sugar. You’ll also learn how to judge serving and portion sizes of the foods you eat. Create a plan you can live with. This will help you keep your blood sugar in your target range while still enjoying your meals.

Keeping a Food Diary

Before you see the dietitian, you may be asked to keep a food diary for a week or two. Write down all the foods you eat and when you eat them. Bring this list with you when you see the dietitian. It will help the dietitian get to know your eating habits.
Healthy Eating for Weight Control

If you are overweight, weight loss can help you keep your blood sugar in your target range. Talk to your dietitian and other healthcare providers about a weight-loss goal. A good starting goal is to lose 5% of your body weight. If you weigh 200 pounds, this means losing 10 pounds. Then, make a plan to help you meet this goal. The good news: Many of the healthy eating choices that help manage blood sugar also help with weight control.

Tips for Weight Control

If you want to lose some weight, reduce the amount of calories you take in. To help do this:

- Reduce the amount you eat at any one time. Eating less at each meal or snack will help with weight control.
- Reduce the amount of regular soda, sports drinks, and fruit juice that you drink. These give you calories without filling you up. Instead, drink plenty of water and other sugar-free liquids.
- Add more vegetables to your meals. These tend to fill you up and give you nutrition with fewer calories.

Learn About Serving Sizes

A serving size is a fixed amount of a food that provides a certain amount of nutrients. One serving of a food is likely smaller than you think. Your dietitian may show you how to use measuring cups or spoons. This can help you get used to the size of a serving. Once you feel comfortable, you can learn to “eyeball” the serving sizes of the foods you eat.

2 to 3 ounces is the size of your palm or a deck of cards.

½ cup is the size of your cupped hand or a golf ball.

1 cup (or a medium-sized piece) is about the size of your fist.
How Carbohydrates Affect Blood Sugar

Just as a car needs the right type of gas to run, you need the right kind of food to function. To sustain energy, your body needs food that contains carbohydrates. But carbohydrates raise blood sugar levels higher and faster than other kinds of food. You don’t have to stop eating all the foods you like. But you do need to know how a food affects your blood sugar.

What Foods Contain the Most Carbohydrates?

You need to eat carbohydrates every day. But the more you eat, the higher your blood sugar may rise. To help keep your blood sugar in your target range, learn which foods contain carbohydrates. Then decide how these foods fit into your meal plan. The main types of carbohydrates are starches, sugars, and fiber. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that doesn’t raise blood sugar. Keep in mind that with diabetes, the important number is the total carbohydrates in a food. The amount of sugar is less important.

Starches

Starches are found in grains, some vegetables, and beans. Grain products include bread, pasta, cereal, and tortillas. Starchy vegetables include potatoes, peas, corn, lima beans, yams, and squash. Kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, and lentils also contain starches.

Sugars

Sugars are found naturally in many foods. Sugar can also be added to foods when they’re processed. Foods that contain natural sugar include fruits, fruit juices, and dairy products. Added sugars are found in most desserts, processed foods, candy, regular soda, and fruit drinks. Foods that don’t taste sweet, like crackers and condiments, often have added sugar.

Fiber

Fiber comes from plant foods. Most fiber isn’t digested by the body. Instead of raising blood sugar levels like other carbohydrates, it actually keeps blood sugar from rising too fast. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, and many nuts.
Learn About Carb Counting

To figure out how many carbohydrates you are eating every day, you can learn a technique called “carb counting.” This system helps you keep track of the carbohydrates you eat at each meal. Ask your healthcare team if this technique should be part of your plan. There are different ways to do carb counting. The chart below can tell you more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC Carbohydrate Servings</th>
<th>ADVANCED Carbohydrate Grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you count carbohydrate servings, one serving of a starch, fruit, or dairy product counts as one “carb.”</td>
<td>When you count carbohydrate grams, you use the “Nutrition Facts” label on packaged foods. The label tells you the actual carbohydrate amount (in grams) in a food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each carb is about 15 grams of carbohydrate. For example:</td>
<td>A dietitian can help you determine how many grams of carbohydrate to have at each meal. If you take insulin, you will also learn how to adjust your mealtime insulin based on your carbohydrate intake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 slice of bread</strong> = 1 starch serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate</td>
<td><strong>This is the most accurate method of counting carbs. But it may be a little harder than counting carbohydrate servings.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 apple</strong> = 1 fruit serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 cup milk</strong> = 1 dairy serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dietitian will help you determine how many carbohydrate servings to have at each meal and snack.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This method is a good way to get started with carb counting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carb Counting Quick Reference

If you are counting carbs, 15 grams of carbohydrate equal one carb serving. The “Nutrition Facts” label will tell you the grams of carbohydrate in a packaged food. This list can help you learn how much of a food equals a one carb serving. It includes some foods that are often unlabeled, such as fruit and snack foods. Keep in mind that the foods contain differing amounts of calories as well as fat, sodium, and other nutrients. Print this PDF to use as a guide.
Planning Your Meals

You’ll work with a dietitian to design a meal plan. Your plan needs to fit with your eating habits and schedule. Planning what and when you eat helps keep your blood sugar in your target range. Aim to eat foods from all the food groups every day.

Eat from All the Food Groups

Eating from all the food groups gives your body the nutrients it needs to work properly. The six food groups are: grains, vegetables, fruits, meat and beans, dairy, and oils. Work with the dietitian to include many types of foods from each group. Variety can keep you from getting bored with your plan.

Use MyPlate

MyPlate is a visual food guide that can help you choose the best types and right amounts of food to eat. Keep these tips in mind as you fill your plate:

- Cover half your plate with vegetables and fruits.
- Split the other half between grains and protein.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products.

Timing Meals

When it comes to blood sugar management, when you eat is as important as what you eat. You may want to eat several small meals spaced evenly through the day to stay in your target range. Pay attention to what keeps your blood sugar steady. And don’t wait until late in the day to get most of your calories. Doing so can cause your blood sugar to get too far out of range.
Put Your Meal Plan into Action

Consult your meal plan before you go to the store. Decide ahead of time what you want to cook. This helps you stay on track while you shop. At the grocery store, read food labels to help you make the healthiest choices. If you don’t do the shopping, be sure the person who does understands your needs.

When You’re Shopping

Look for the “Nutrition Facts” label on packaged foods. (Shown here is the newest version of the label you’ll begin seeing in stores.) The Nutrition Facts label tells you how much of the food makes up one serving. It also lists the amount of carbohydrate and calories in each serving. This will help you decide if the food fits into your meal plan. When you shop, look for:

- Brightly colored fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats, such as chicken, turkey, and fish
- Low-fat dairy products
- Less-processed whole-wheat and whole-grain foods
- Foods lower in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat

![Nutrition Facts]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 servings per container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes 0g Added Sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients: Chicken broth, carrots, cooked white chicken meat (white chicken meat, water, salt, sodium phosphate, isolated soy protein, modified cornstarch), potatoes, celery, rice, sodium nitrate. Contains soy.

Serving size. This tells you how much of the food makes up one serving. If you eat more than one serving, all the other values increase.

Calories. This is the number of calories in each serving. Eating too many calories can lead to weight gain.

Total carbohydrate. This tells you the grams of carbohydrate in one serving. If you count carbs, this number helps you. New on the label: Sugars added during processing (added sugars) are listed separately.

When You’re Cooking

Use the following tips to help you prepare healthier meals at home:

- Trim fat off meats before cooking.
- Broil, steam, bake, or grill meats and vegetables instead of frying.
- Use olive or canola oil instead of butter or lard for cooking.
- Don’t cook meat and vegetables in cream- or butter-based sauces.
Eating Away from Home

You may not always have control over what is available to eat or how it’s prepared. But you can choose which foods to eat and how much to eat at once. You can follow your meal plan, even when you eat away from home.

At a Restaurant

At restaurants, use the following tips to help you stick to your meal plan:

- Ask how food is prepared. Avoid fried or breaded foods, or ones sautéed in butter or cream.
- Ask if sauces and dressings can be served on the side, and use them sparingly.
- Most restaurants serve large portions. Eat half your meal and take the rest home.
- At a buffet, remember to choose the best types and right amounts of food to eat. Devote at least half your plate to vegetables and green salad, and ¼ each to starch and protein.
- Split a dish or dessert with a friend or family member.
- Skip the bread or chips basket before the main meal.

A Note About Alcohol

Drinking alcohol can cause your blood sugar to fall quickly. If you do drink alcohol, never drink on an empty stomach. This can cause dangerously low blood sugar. And be aware that alcohol adds calories. You may have to adjust your meal plan if you decide to have a drink. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if any of the medications you take interact with alcohol.
Holidays and Special Occasions

Parties and holidays often involve special or traditional foods and drinks. You can eat foods that aren’t normally part of your meal plan. Be sure to adjust your meal plan or insulin dose accordingly. Ask your healthcare provider to show you how. Remember to check your blood sugar often to see how different foods affect you. If you fast for religious reasons, talk to both your healthcare provider and clergy about safer ways to fast.

Social Situations: When It’s Hard to Say “No”

Well-meaning family and friends may not always understand your meal choices. This can be especially true at parties or other social gatherings. Do you find yourself eating or cooking to please others? If so, try the tips below:

- You can accept any food or drink that is offered. But you don’t have to put it in your body. Just holding a drink or small plate of food is often enough. This will usually keep people from insisting that you have another helping or drink.
- Plan ahead. Bring a dish to share that you know you will enjoy. Then you won’t have to feel deprived if most of the offered food doesn’t fit into your meal plan.
- At home, you can cook different side dishes or prepare traditional foods in healthier ways. Talk with your family about the benefits these changes can bring.

Can you think of more ideas to help you stick with your meal plan?
Ways You Can Help

Choose to change your own eating habits, too. Eating healthier is better for the whole family. More ways you can help:

- Ask if your family member wants to be reminded about his or her meal plan. If so, give gentle reminders. Try not to nag or judge.
- Buy and keep healthier foods in the house.
- Explore new ways of cooking and eating. Try new recipes. Look for healthier takes on old favorites.
- Keep in mind that food can be a very emotional topic.
- Believe in your loved one’s ability to make changes. Saying “I know you can do it” goes a long way.

Notes for Family and Friends

A family member with diabetes may choose to make changes in his or her eating habits. Your support during this time is very important. Ask how involved your family member wants you to be. And remember: Change can be difficult! The person with diabetes needs to be the one to decide on making changes. Your role is to be supportive and encouraging.
Chapter 3 Quiz

Congratulations!

You’ve just finished Chapter 3. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 4
Getting Active
Getting active is a great way to help manage diabetes. In this section, you will learn:

- Walking and other activities help manage diabetes by lowering blood sugar.
- Activity can help you meet weight-loss goals.
- You can overcome barriers that stop you from meeting your activity goals.
Getting Active

Being physically active every day can help you manage your blood sugar. That’s because an active lifestyle can improve your body’s ability to use insulin. Activity can help you lose weight. It can also help delay or prevent complications of diabetes. And it’s a great way to relieve stress. If you haven’t been exercising, be sure to talk with your healthcare provider before getting started.

How Much Activity Do You Need?

If activity is new to you, start slow and steady. Begin with 10 minutes of activity daily. Work up to a goal of getting 150 minutes of activity a week. Spread this over at least 3 days a week. Choose activities that get your heart beating faster (such as walking, jogging, swimming, or biking). You don’t have to do a day’s exercise all at once. You can break it into periods of 10 minutes or more spread throughout the day.

Sitting Is Bad for Your Health

If you’re like most people, sitting is a big part of your day. Studies have shown that time spent sitting is bad for health. In fact, sitting for long periods raises a person’s risk for health problems, including heart and blood vessel disease and cancer. It also makes diabetes complications more likely. Limit sitting to no more than 30 minutes at a time. After each half hour of sitting, get up and move around for at least a few minutes before you sit down again.

Activity and Your Weight-Loss Plan

Along with healthy eating, being active is key to meeting your weight-loss goals. Your plan should include specific activity goals to aim for. For example, you might plan to take a 10-minute walk every day at lunch. Is that too ambitious? Start with 3 days a week. Then work up to every day. Talk with your healthcare provider about setting specific activity goals that work for you.
Get Walking!

You don’t have to join a gym or own pricey sports equipment. Just get out and walk. Your goal is to walk briskly to make your heart beat faster. This helps your heart and blood vessels. The more you walk, the easier it gets. Make it part of each day. Walk with a friend or a group to keep it fun and interesting. Try taking several short walks to meet your goal. You can get a wearable device (called a pedometer or fitness tracker) to count your steps. This tracks how much you move throughout the day. Remember: With each step, you’re doing a little more to help your body use insulin.

Improve Flexibility and Balance

Having better flexibility and balance helps make tasks of everyday life easier. They help you move better. They ease tension in muscles and joints. They also help prevent falls that can lead to injury. Try standing on one foot while you brush your teeth. Do gentle stretches anytime. And consider yoga or tai chi classes. These are great ways to improve movement and balance and make it fun. Aim to do these kinds of exercises 2 to 3 days a week.

Build Strength

To feel your best, add strength training to your routine. Also called resistance training, this means working out with weight machines, resistance bands, or free weights. Strength training helps build muscle and increases endurance. It may also improve heart health and help you manage your weight. Check with your healthcare provider before starting. Then aim to do strength training at least 2 days a week.
Sticking with It

Help make activity a lifelong habit. The key is finding activities that you enjoy. You may enjoy getting into a routine. Or you may want to vary your activity to keep from getting bored. Try to work extra amounts of activity into your daily routine.

What You Can Do

Work Activity into Your Day

Small bits of activity add up! Explore ways to move a little more all day long. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator whenever possible.
- Walk to see a neighbor or colleague instead of calling, texting, or emailing.
- Ride a bike to run errands.
- Walk 1 or 2 stops farther before getting on the bus.
- Park farther away from store entrances.

Make Activity Fun

Choose physical activities you enjoy that fit into your routine. Some examples include:

- Walking the dog around the neighborhood or in a park.
- Hiking or biking with your kids or grandkids.
- Joining a social group that walks or does other activities.
- Putting on your favorite music and dancing at home.
- Doing yard work such as gardening, mowing the lawn, or raking leaves.
Activity and Blood Sugar

Physical activity is important when you have diabetes. But you need to keep an eye on your blood sugar level. Check often if you have been active for longer than usual, or if the activity was unplanned. Make it a habit to check your blood sugar before being active. Check again several hours later. Blood sugar may decrease for a few hours after activity. Use your blood sugar log to keep track of how activity affected your numbers. If you take insulin, you may be able to adjust your dose before a planned activity. This can help prevent lows. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more.

Staying Safe

Being active may cause blood sugar to drop faster than usual. This is especially true if you take insulin or other medications that lower blood sugar. But there are things you can do to help reduce the risk of lows.

- Always carry or wear identification that says you have diabetes. Carry a cellphone in case of emergency.
- Drink plenty of water before and during activity.
- Keep a fast-acting sugar, such as glucose tablets, on hand in case of low blood sugar.
- Skip activity if you’re sick.

Other Safety Tips

To help avoid injuries and prevent harm:

- Include friends and family when you can. Being active with a “buddy” is safer than being alone.
- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Use the right safety equipment for the activity. For instance, wear a bicycle helmet when riding a bike.
- Wear closed-toe shoes that fit your feet well.

A medical ID bracelet that says you have diabetes can help keep you safe in an emergency.
Overcoming Roadblocks

Many people want to be as active as possible. But being active every day can be a challenge. You may find yourself making excuses or getting distracted. If so, what’s keeping you from reaching your activity goals? What solution can you think of to keep you moving? For example, in the winter, if it’s too cold to go outside and exercise, you can stay inside and dance to your favorite music. Try to come up with ideas that will help you stay on track.

### What You Can Do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Your Barriers</th>
<th>Solutions to Keep You Moving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t want to walk in my neighborhood after dark.”</td>
<td>Find an indoor mall near you. Take a friend or family member with you. You can also walk up and down the stairs at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m too tired to be active when I get home from work.”</td>
<td>Take breaks for short walks during the day. Three 10-minute walks will boost your energy and help you meet a 30-minute goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In the winter, it’s too cold to exercise outside!”</td>
<td>Stay inside and dance to your favorite music. Follow a workout video online or on a DVD. Or try a video game that makes you get up and move.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Print this PDF and use it to write down your roadblocks. Then, come up with solutions that can help you overcome them.
Chapter 4 Quiz

Congratulations!

You’ve just finished Chapter 4. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 5

Taking Medications

Most people with diabetes need medication to help keep their blood sugar in their target range. In this chapter, you will learn:

- How different medications work to help manage blood sugar.
- Where different diabetes medications work in the body.
- How to develop a daily medication routine.
Medications for Diabetes

Like healthy eating and physical activity, taking medication can help you manage diabetes. Diabetes medications improve your ability to keep your blood sugar in your target range. These medications are powerful tools that can keep you healthier by delaying or preventing complications. Many people take one or more medications to help manage their blood sugar.

Taking Medication

Diabetes medication may be taken as pills. It may also be given through injection. Insulin may be given by injection or an insulin pump.

Where the Medications Work

Diabetes medications are grouped into separate drug classes. Medications in the same class work in similar ways. Drugs in different classes act on different parts of the body. For instance, some medications increase insulin sensitivity in cells. Others prevent the liver from making and releasing too much glucose. And some cause carbohydrates to break down more slowly in the digestive tract. The diagram below shows where each class of diabetes medication works.

- **Muscle and fat cells**
  - Thiazolidinediones
  - Insulin

- **Liver**
  - Biguanides
  - Insulin

- **Kidneys** (behind other organs)
  - SGLT2 inhibitors

- **Small intestine**
  - Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors
  - Some injectable hormones

- **Pancreas** (behind stomach)
  - Sulfonylureas
  - Glinides
  - DPP-4 inhibitors
  - Some injectable hormones
## Types of Diabetes Medications

Many people with diabetes need to take the medications described in this chart. Ask your healthcare provider to help you learn more about the different medications prescribed for you. Print this PDF and keep it as a guide to how your medications may work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Class</th>
<th>How the Medication Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors</td>
<td>These pills slow down the digestion of certain carbs. This can help keep blood sugar levels from rising too much after meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biguanides</td>
<td>Biguanides decrease the liver’s glucose production and decrease insulin resistance in liver, muscle, and fat cells. They may also improve blood lipid (fat) levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP-4 inhibitors</td>
<td>DPP-4 inhibitors increase the body’s release of insulin in response to a rise in glucose levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glinides*</td>
<td>Glinides cause a burst of insulin to be released when you eat a meal. They are short-acting for mealtime use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGLT2 inhibitors*</td>
<td>These medications help reduce the amount of glucose in the blood. They do this by triggering the kidneys to send glucose out of the body in the urine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulfonylureas*</td>
<td>Sulfonylureas stimulate the pancreas to produce and release more insulin. These drugs can be long-acting and may stay in the body for up to 72 hours. (Most last 24 hours or less.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiazolidinediones</td>
<td>These medications help decrease insulin resistance in muscle and fat cells. They also help decrease production of glucose in the liver and improve blood lipid (fat) levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulin*</td>
<td>Insulin is taken by shot or pump. It regulates blood sugar if the pancreas can’t produce enough insulin. You may need to take more than one type. Some types are short-acting, for mealtime use. Others work over longer periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other injectable hormones</td>
<td>These medications are also taken as shots. They are versions of natural hormones that regulate insulin production in the pancreas and the release of glucose into the bloodstream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Medications in these classes can cause low blood sugar.

Note: This chart does not imply endorsement of any type or brand of diabetes medication. It does not list side effects, adverse reactions, interactions, or precautions for these medications. Only a doctor can recommend or prescribe these medications.
If You Need to Use Injections

Insulin and certain other diabetes medications are given by injection. Injections allow medication to go into your body without being destroyed in the stomach. Giving yourself shots every day might seem overwhelming at first. But they can help you feel better and keep your blood sugar on target.

Understanding Insulin

You may need to take insulin to replace what your body doesn’t make. Insulin is taken by injection. Otherwise, it would be broken down by the digestive system before it reached the bloodstream. People with type 1 diabetes need to begin taking insulin right after diagnosis. People with type 2 diabetes may need insulin as well. Taking insulin can give you greater flexibility in your daily blood sugar management. You will learn how to adjust your dosage based on your blood sugar goals, meal plan, and activity level. Talk with your healthcare provider about the types of insulin. You may need to use more than one type.

Getting Familiar with Shots

Your diabetes educator will help you practice giving yourself shots until you feel more comfortable. You may find that giving yourself shots is easier than you thought. And with practice, it can become part of your everyday routine.

Managing Injections Anywhere You Go

You won’t always be home when it’s time for insulin shots. Be prepared to inject insulin no matter where you are. Most injection devices can be used discreetly, even at the dinner table. You can also choose private locations to perform injections, such as a public restroom or your parked car.
Taking Other Medications

In addition to diabetes medications, you may need to take medications for other health issues. These include medications to help prevent or treat heart disease and related issues. They also include medications for health problems you have. Know how to take these medications correctly. Also be sure that your doctor and all your healthcare providers know all the medications you’re taking.

Heart Medications

When you have diabetes, you are at increased risk for problems with blood vessels in the heart and the rest of the body. If you have conditions like high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol, your risk is even greater. To help protect your heart and blood vessels, you may be given medications to treat these problems.

Be Aware of Drug Interactions

Medications prescribed for different health problems can interfere with each other. Over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, and herbs can also interact with medications you take. To help prevent interactions:

- Be sure to tell all your doctors and other healthcare providers about every type of medication you’re taking. This includes remedies for headaches, allergies, colds, and even constipation. It also includes herbs and supplements.
- Never add a vitamin, herb, or supplement to your medication plan without talking to your doctor first. This includes supplements that promise to treat your diabetes. These are unlikely to work as promised. They can even be harmful.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there are any medications you need to avoid.
- Read the warning labels and directions on all medications you take.
- If you get a new medication or change pharmacies, be sure the pharmacist has a list of all of the medications you’re taking.
Managing Your Medications

You may take more than one medication for diabetes and related conditions. For your health, taking your medications on time and as directed is essential. Stick with your plan.

Stick to a Routine

Taking diabetes medications at the right times will help keep your blood sugar steady. Like a meal routine, a medication routine can help you stay in your target range. Use a pill organizer and a daily schedule to keep yourself on track. Alerts on your watch or cell phone can also be set to remind you of your schedule. If you are having trouble, ask a family member or friend to help. And be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you miss a dose.

Tips for Taking Medications

The tips below can help you stick with your medication routine.

- Refill your prescriptions before they run out. Check the brand and dosage to make sure they are correct.
- Prepare a small travel kit and take your medications with you everywhere you go.
- Ask family or friends for help if you are having trouble remembering to take your medications.
- Make filling your pill organizer part of your weekly routine. Ask a family member to help you stay organized.

A pill organizer can help you keep track of the medications you take each day.
Taking Medications Safely

The tips below can help you stick with your medication routine.

- Hold on to the instructions that come with each medication.
- Do not share medications.
- Know what to do if you miss a dose. If you don’t, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Call your doctor right away if you notice any side effects. But don’t stop taking your medications unless told to do so.
- Check with your pharmacist when you fill a new prescription or buy an over-the-counter medication, vitamin, supplement, or herbal remedy. Ask whether the new drug is safe to take with the rest of your medications.
- Ask your pharmacist to print a list of all of your medications for you. Bring this list with you to doctor’s visits. If you use more than one pharmacy, be sure each of the pharmacies has a full list of your medications.

Notes for Family and Friends

Diabetes medications can sometimes cause low blood sugar. It’s important that you learn to recognize the signs of low blood sugar, also called hypoglycemia, which can come on quickly. You may need to be prepared to provide glucose tablets or another fast-acting sugar. In some cases, a special injection (of a hormone called glucagon) is needed if severe hypoglycemia occurs. You may need to learn how to inject this medication in an emergency.
Know What You’re Taking

Know about the medications you take. For each medication, know the answers to the questions below. If you don’t know, be sure to ask your healthcare provider.

• What is the name of the medication? Find out the brand name and the generic name, if any.
• What does the medication do?
• How often should I take this medication? At what time of day?
• How much of the medication should I take?
• Do I need to follow any special instructions while taking this?
• Are there any activities or foods I should avoid when taking this medication?

Make Your Medication Plan Work for You

A medication plan that fits your needs is one that you can follow. Be sure to have your concerns addressed. Don’t let confusion, cost, or frustration keep you from better health.

• Talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you feel you can’t afford your medications. There are often ways they can help. Do not take a lower dosage than prescribed to save money.
• Don’t change your dosage or stop taking any of your medications on your own. Always talk to your doctor first.
• Ask for help and suggestions if you can’t remember to take your medications or have any issues with taking them.

Print the PDF above and fill out the medication chart. This is your medication plan. Make a copy so you can carry it with you.
Congratulations!

You’ve just finished Chapter 5. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 6

Maintaining Your Health
CHAPTER 6

Maintaining Your Overall Health

Living well with a chronic condition means taking care of your whole body. In this chapter, you will learn:

• How to maintain your emotional health.
• The importance of managing high blood pressure and cholesterol.
• How to keep healthy with regular tests and immunizations.
• What you can do to protect your eyes, gums, and feet.
• If you smoke, tips for quitting.
• How to manage changes in your daily routine, such as sick days and travel.
Caring for Your Emotional Health

Living with a chronic condition takes focus and concentration every day. You don’t get “days off” from diabetes management. This may leave you feeling tired or “burned out.” Some days will be harder than others. To help fight burnout, take care of yourself as a whole person, not just a person with diabetes. The following tips can help.

Dealing with Stress

Everyone feels stressed at times. But for people with diabetes, managing stress is even more important. This is because stress can actually increase blood sugar. So, think about what causes stressful feelings. Then, find ways to limit or avoid stressful situations. To combat stress, try:

- **Physical activity**, a natural stress reliever that helps to lower blood sugar.
- **Making time to do things you enjoy**, such as hobbies or spending time with family and friends.
- **Talking** to a counselor or a close friend.

Take Time to Relax

To fight stress, take time out every day to relax your body and clear your mind. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about the following relaxation techniques:

- **Yoga, tai chi, meditation, and prayer** are all ways of relaxing the mind and body.
- **Deep breathing** can help to release physical tension.
- **Visualization** is when you picture a relaxing scene in your mind. It’s a great way to recharge your mental batteries.
Making Change Work for You

Having diabetes means changes to your life. Everyone handles change a little differently. If you are having trouble adjusting, the following tips can help.

Prepare Yourself for Slow, Steady Progress

Change doesn’t happen overnight, but small changes add up. You may not see the benefits of the changes you make right away. But over time, you’ll feel better and be able to do more in your daily life.

Ask for Support

Changes such as meal plans and taking insulin can have a big impact on your life. Tell the people close to you how they can help you stay on track. You might want to join a diabetes support group. There, you can talk with people who have many of the same concerns, fears, and goals.

Acknowledge New Emotions

It’s common to resist or feel angry or scared. You’re not alone. Share your feelings with your healthcare team and people close to you. Acknowledging new emotions is the first step toward accepting them.

Enjoy Your Life

Don’t forget to have fun! Make time every week for at least one activity you like. What are some things you like to do but haven’t done in a while?
Managing Cardiovascular Risk Factors

In addition to high blood sugar levels, many people with diabetes have high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels, too. If not controlled, these factors increase risk for cardiovascular disease even more. But you can make changes to lower your risk.

If You Have High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is the measure of the force in the blood vessels as the heart pumps blood. If this level is too high, it can damage blood vessels. The effects of high blood pressure and high blood sugar together can cause even more damage.

If You Have Unhealthy Cholesterol Levels

Lipids are fats in the blood. Cholesterol is one type of blood lipid. Some lipids are healthy. Others contribute to blocked arteries and heart disease. Having diabetes makes you more likely to have unhealthy cholesterol levels. Unhealthy cholesterol levels are a big factor that leads to cardiovascular disease.

What You Can Do

The good news: Many of the things that help you control blood pressure and cholesterol are things you’re already doing to control diabetes. These include:

- Healthier eating
- Being more active
- Taking medications
- Quitting smoking
Managing your blood sugar helps reduce your risk for complications. But don’t forget the rest of your body! See your doctor for regular checkups and any tests and immunizations that are recommended.

Have Regular Checkups

Get regular checkups with your doctor. Keep up-to-date on the tests and immunizations listed below. Ask what other tests you might need based on your age, health, and gender, such as cancer screenings.

Keep an Eye on Risk Factors

Certain risk factors increase the likelihood of having complications from diabetes. So certain tests should be done regularly. Have these tests done as often as stated below or as recommended by your doctor. Then work with your doctor to set your health goals.

- **A1C:** Every 3 to 6 months
- **Blood pressure test:** every time you visit the doctor
- **Cholesterol and blood lipids:** at least once a year
- **Urine albumin:** at least once a year
- **Eye exam:** once a year
- **Foot exam:** every doctor visit

Stay Up-to-Date on Immunizations

To help stay healthy, have immunizations as often as stated below, unless told to do otherwise.

- **Flu shot:** Once a year, in the fall.
- **Pneumonia shot:** At least once, then as directed by your doctor.
- **Hepatitis B:** As soon as possible if you’re younger than 60, or as recommended by your doctor if you’re 60 or older.
Reducing Your Risk for Complications

You’ve learned that healthy eating and daily activity help protect organs, such as your heart. To further reduce your risk for complications, monitor your feet, eyes, and gums. These are all places where high blood sugar can cause problems. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more.

Foot Care

Over time, high blood sugar affects nerves and blood vessels that supply the legs and feet. This means you may not be able to feel if you have a cut or infection. Wounds on your feet may be slow to heal, and may infect easily. Because of this, you need to pay close attention to your feet. Check them daily. Ask a family member for help if you have trouble seeing your feet, especially the bottoms. Remove your shoes and socks every time you see the doctor so your feet can be examined.

Preventing Foot Problems

- Inspect your feet every day for cuts, cracks, sores, or swelling. Look for color changes. Watch for cuts and scrapes that are slow to heal, itch, feel warm, ooze fluid, or smell bad. If you notice any of these problems, contact your healthcare provider right away.
- Check for objects inside your shoes before you put them on.
- Ask your doctor whether you should consider shoes made for people with diabetes. These can help prevent foot problems.
- Wash your feet in warm, not hot water and dry them thoroughly, especially between your toes. Never soak your feet.
- Talk to your doctor if you need help cutting and filing your toenails safely.
- Ask your healthcare provider for a referral to a foot health specialist, called a podiatrist.

Use a mirror to inspect the soles of your feet for injuries.

Click on the video above to learn how to care for your feet.

This step-by-step guide can help you check for foot problems.
Eye Care

Diabetes can lead to **retinopathy**. This is a condition caused by changes in the retina, the part of the eye that senses light. If not treated, retinopathy can lead to blindness.

**Preventing Eye Problems**
- See an eye care specialist such as an ophthalmologist or optometrist at least once a year. Do this even if your eyes feel fine and you have no trouble with your eyesight.
- Call the doctor if you have new dark spots in your vision, poor vision in dim light, or eye pain or pressure.

Gum Care

People with diabetes are at risk for infection that destroys gums and the bones that hold the teeth. This is called **periodontal**, or gum, disease. The infection can also enter the bloodstream, affecting the heart and other organs.

**Preventing Gum Problems**
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day. Don’t forget to floss at least once a day.
- See a dentist at least twice a year.
- Be sure to tell anyone who works on your teeth that you have diabetes.
- Call your dentist if you have gums that are red, swollen, tender, or bleeding. Also call if your teeth loosen or shift position or your gums pull away from your teeth.

Checking for Problem Sleep

People with type 2 diabetes may be more likely to have a problem called **sleep apnea**. With this, breathing stops for short periods throughout the night. Sleep apnea often causes loud snoring at night and sleepiness during the day. It can also lead to serious health problems if it’s not treated. If you suspect you might have sleep apnea, ask your doctor about testing.
**Quitting Smoking**

If you smoke, quitting is one of the most important changes you can make for your health. Smoking increases your chances of developing cardiovascular disease. It also makes complications of diabetes more likely. Quitting helps reduce this risk. After you quit, you may feel better, have more energy, and notice less shortness of breath. Quitting smoking isn’t easy, but millions of people have done it. You can, too!

### Have a “Quit Plan”

Quitting takes patience and a plan. You’ll boost your chances of success by forming a “quit plan” ahead of time. For your plan:

- Pick a date to quit and put it on your calendar.
- Decide who you will ask to support you.
- Write a list of the reasons that you want to quit. Think of as many reasons as you can. Keep this list with you and read it often. Add to it when you think of something new.
- Plan how you’ll deal with urges to smoke.

### Track Your Triggers

Do certain emotions, such as frustration, trigger your urge to smoke? How about specific people or places? Make a list of the situations that make you want to smoke. Then think about ways you can avoid or deal with these situations.

### Get Support

Quit-smoking classes coach people through the process of quitting. Telephone counseling can also help keep you on track. Ask your healthcare team to point you to a class or counselor. Also talk to your healthcare provider about the quit-smoking products on the next page. Good social support and assistance from medications have been shown to help people quit smoking—and stay quit.

### No Safe Tobacco

Maybe you don’t smoke cigarettes. But you use e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or snuff. Or you smoke a pipe, cigars, cloves, or bidis. Beware: All forms of tobacco contain nicotine, which harms your body. No delivery method is safe.

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**Ask your healthcare provider for advice on products to help you quit smoking.**

**Click on the video to learn how you can quit smoking for good.**
Choose a Quit-Smoking Product to Help

Using a quit-smoking product makes you much more likely to quit for good. Some products can be bought over the counter. Others require a prescription. Ask your healthcare provider to help you make a decision about which to try.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over the Counter</th>
<th>How It Works</th>
<th>Length of Treatment</th>
<th>Possible Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nicotine Patch*  | • Gives you nicotine through the skin at a constant rate  
                   • Ask your doctor about combining the patch with nicotine gum or nasal spray | Take smaller and smaller doses over about 2 months | • Skin rash, itching  
                   • Trouble sleeping  
                   • Nausea |
| Nicotine Gum*    | • Gives you nicotine through the mouth | Take smaller and smaller doses over about 2 to 3 months | • Sore mouth or jaw  
                   • Indigestion, hiccups  
                   • Dizziness, nausea |
| Nicotine Lozenges* | • Gives you nicotine through the mouth | Take smaller and smaller doses over about 3 months | • Sore mouth  
                   • Belching, hiccups  
                   • Dizziness, nausea, weakness |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescription Only</th>
<th>How It Works</th>
<th>Length of Treatment</th>
<th>Possible Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nicotine Nasal Spray* | • Gives you nicotine through the nose  
                        • Works more quickly than other nicotine products | Use for 3 to 6 months | • Irritated nose, eyes, throat  
                        • Coughing, sneezing  
                        • Anxiety, restlessness |
| Nicotine Inhaler*  | • Nicotine is breathed in through the mouth | Use for up to 6 months; take smaller and smaller doses over about 3 months | • Mouth and throat irritation  
                        • Coughing |
| Bupropion SR       | • Reduces withdrawal symptoms and urges  
                        • Does not contain nicotine | Start 2 weeks before you quit, then take for 2 to 6 months | Behavioral changes, including depression, hostility, and suicidal thoughts and actions |
| Varenicline        | • Blocks withdrawal symptoms and urges  
                        • Does not contain nicotine | Start 1 week before you quit, then take for 3 months | Behavioral changes, including depression, hostility, and suicidal thoughts and actions |

All products conflict with certain other medications or medical conditions. If you have questions, ask your pharmacist or doctor.
*These products contain nicotine. Don’t smoke while using a nicotine product. Doing so could give you a dangerous overdose of nicotine.

Print out this PDF and ask your healthcare provider to help you decide which medication is right for you.
Diabetes and Intimacy

Intimacy and sexual function are an important part of life. But over time, high blood sugar can contribute to physical problems that affect intimacy. The good news is that these problems can be treated. Talk to your healthcare provider.

Sex and Intimacy

Diabetes can lead to problems with sexual function in both men and women. In men, this may include trouble having erections, known as erectile dysfunction, or ED. Women may have problems with arousal or orgasms. In any case, don’t hesitate to talk to your healthcare provider. It may be that your diabetes management plan needs to be changed or adjusted. Your doctor might also prescribe a medication that can help with a specific sexual issue.

If You’re Thinking of Pregnancy

If you could possibly get pregnant, you must plan ahead. High blood sugar can affect an unborn baby. This means that blood sugar levels should be as close as possible to normal before and during pregnancy. Your treatment plan is likely to need adjustment. So talk to your healthcare provider right away if you are thinking of getting pregnant. If you do become pregnant, be prepared to keep your blood sugar tightly managed. This is vital for a safe pregnancy and healthy baby.
On the Road

Changes in your normal routine might make it harder to follow your meal plan and medication schedule. But with a little planning, you can manage diabetes anywhere you go. A diabetes “kit bag” can help you stay organized. After you complete your kit, you can take it wherever you go.

When You’re Driving

Medications that can cause low blood sugar may affect your ability to drive safely. Always check your blood sugar before you get behind the wheel. If your blood sugar is lower than 100, eat or drink a snack to raise it to a safe level. Be sure to carry fast-acting sugar with you. If you feel symptoms of low blood sugar while driving, pull over so you can take action. Keep your diabetes supplies where you can reach them, not in the back seat, glove compartment, or trunk. Store medications, especially insulin, away from direct heat, such as sunlight. In case of emergency, always carry identification that says you have diabetes.

When You’re Traveling

Be prepared to manage your blood sugar everywhere you go. If you are flying, your diabetes supplies are allowed on board, but they must be screened. Separate them from your other belongings for screening. Carry your travel kit, with your supplies clearly labeled. Keep it with you at all times, not inside checked baggage! Make sure you have identification with you that says you have diabetes. As you travel, remember to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Check your blood sugar often. Ask your diabetes team for advice if you are traveling across time zones.

Print this PDF to help you pack your own diabetes kit bag.
When You’re Sick

Having the flu, or even a cold, can make it hard to keep your blood sugar in your target range. You may not feel well enough to be active or eat regular food. Your diabetes healthcare team can help you develop an action plan for sick days. Follow all instructions from your healthcare provider closely.

If Your Blood Sugar Changes

Your blood sugar can rise quickly when you are sick. High blood sugar may also be a sign of infection. So it’s important to check your blood sugar often. Try to stick to your meal plan. If you have trouble eating solid foods, try soup, applesauce, or yogurt. And be sure to drink plenty of water and other sugar-free fluids to stay hydrated.

If You Can’t Eat

Your body needs carbohydrates in order to function. If you can’t eat at all, you will need to drink liquids with sugar. This includes fruit juice, regular soda, and sports drinks. Talk to your diabetes team about taking in the right amount of liquid carbohydrates. This will help keep your blood sugar from going too high or too low. Continue to drink water to stay hydrated.

Adjusting Your Insulin Dosage

Even if you can’t eat, don’t stop taking insulin when you are sick. If your blood sugar is high, you may need to adjust your dosage. If you adjust your insulin dosage, be sure to check your blood sugar often. This is to make sure your blood sugar doesn’t go too low. If your blood sugar falls below 70, take action! Eat or drink at least 15 grams of fast-acting sugar, such as glucose tablets or juice. Follow the directions on page 15 for treating low blood sugar.
Ask for Help!

When you’re sick, try to get plenty of rest. Only do as much as you comfortably can. You may need to ask family or friends for help with daily tasks. This may include cooking and cleaning, running errands, or picking up medications if you’re almost out of them. Those close to you should learn to recognize the signs of low blood sugar. These include confusion, sleepiness, or difficulty concentrating. Make sure family and friends know how to treat low blood sugar if needed.

When to Call the Doctor

Call the doctor right away if you:

- Have vomiting or diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- Have blood sugar above 240 for more than 1 day.
- Have moderate to large ketones for 2 or more checks.
- Have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Have symptoms of ketoacidosis, which are very dry mouth, thirst, fruity-smelling breath, trouble breathing.
Notes for Family and Friends

When someone you love has diabetes, it can mean big changes in your life. It’s likely that you will be called on as a helper, caregiver, or source of emotional support. Diabetes can be stressful for the whole family. Remember, taking care of yourself is just as important as taking care of your loved one.

To Help Your Loved One

It may be hard to watch someone you love cope with a chronic condition every day. You can help by doing the following:

• Learning as much as you can about diabetes and preventing complications. This will help you understand why your family member is making so many changes.
• Learning the signs of high and low blood sugar and how to treat them. Know when to call the doctor in an emergency.
• Learning to be patient. At first, diabetes management can be confusing or frustrating.
• Asking how you can be most helpful.

To Help Yourself

Caring for someone else can take an emotional toll on you. Don’t forget to make time to focus on yourself. This is not selfish! Your emotional health is important. Some of the following suggestions may help:

• Understand that some things are out of your control. You can be supportive, but you can’t manage your family member’s condition for them.
• Take time to relax.
• Ask for and accept help from others when you need to take breaks. Don’t feel guilty—we all need time to ourselves.
• Be aware of how you react to stress. If you become easily upset, stop for a moment. Take deep breaths, count to 10, or go for a walk to calm down.
• Look for support groups for caregivers. There are resources listed in this workbook that may help.
Chapter 6 Quiz

Congratulations!

You’ve just finished Chapter 6. Now click on the question mark above to find out how much you learned.

If you have problems viewing this quiz, try turning off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.
CHAPTER 7
Resources and Glossary

This chapter gives you resources to help you manage your diabetes every day. Don’t hesitate to talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org
800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)

American Heart Association
www.heart.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
www.eatright.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

USDA MyPlate
www.choosemyplate.gov
Glossary of Terms

**A1C:** A test to measure glucose buildup in the blood over a period of several months.

**Artery:** A blood vessel that carries oxygenated blood from the heart to the rest of the body.

**Blood glucose meter:** A device that tests the amount of glucose in the blood.

**Blood pressure:** The force created by blood flow as it presses against blood vessel walls.

**Blood vessels:** Tubes that carry blood throughout all parts of the body.

**Carb:** 15 grams of carbohydrates; equal to one carbohydrate serving.

**Carbohydrate:** A nutrient in food that is broken down into glucose during digestion.

**Cardiovascular:** Pertaining to the heart and blood vessels.

**Cholesterol:** A waxy, fat like substance used by the body to build cell walls. If too much is present, it can build up and block arteries.

**Chronic:** Lifelong or ongoing. A chronic condition, such as diabetes, can be managed with treatment but not cured.

**Comorbidity:** A disease or disorder occurring alongside, or at the same time as, another.

**Complications:** Serious health problems that develop over time due to high blood sugar.

**Diabetes:** A condition in which the body cannot produce insulin or use it properly.

**Diabetes educator:** An expert in teaching people how to manage diabetes.

**Endocrinologist:** A doctor who specializes in how hormones work in the body.

**Estimated Average Glucose (eAG):** A number value assigned to A1C test results.

**Glucagon:** A hormone that quickly raises blood sugar levels.

**Glucose:** A simple form of sugar that is used to fuel the body’s cells.

**Heart disease:** A condition that affects the heart’s ability to function.

**High blood pressure (hypertension):** Blood pressure that is higher than the normal range.

**Hormone:** A chemical released by special cells that tells other cells what to do.

**Hyperglycemia:** A condition in which there is too much glucose in the blood.

**Hypoglycemia:** A condition in which there is not enough glucose in the blood.
**Injection (shot):** Using a needle and syringe to put liquid medications into the body.

**Insulin:** A hormone produced by the pancreas that enables glucose to enter cells.

**Insulin resistance:** A condition in which cells do not respond properly to insulin.

**Lancet:** A device that uses a tiny needle to prick the skin for a drop of blood.

**Lipids:** Fat like substances in the blood.

**Liver:** An organ that stores and releases glucose when needed.

**Nerves:** Fibers that convey signals to and from the brain.

**Pancreas:** An organ that makes insulin and releases it into the bloodstream.

**Pedometer:** A device worn on the body that counts how many steps are taken.

**Periodontal disease:** Infection of gum tissue. Also called gum disease.

**Peripheral arterial disease (PAD):** Damage to the arteries that supply blood to the legs and feet.

**Plaque:** Fatty deposits that build up inside arteries and reduce blood flow.

**Podiatrist:** A doctor who specializes in foot care.

**Registered dietitian:** An expert in food and nutrition.

**Retinopathy:** An eye disease that leads to damage of blood vessels in the eyes.

**Saturated fat:** A type of fat that comes from animals. It increases LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.

**Syringe:** A device that uses a small needle to inject liquid medications into the body.

**Target range:** The level of blood sugar a patient is told to aim for as often as possible.

**Trans fat:** Fat produced when liquid oil is made into a solid fat. It increases LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.

**Triglycerides:** Building blocks of fats.

**Type 1 diabetes:** A chronic condition in which the pancreas cannot produce insulin.

**Type 2 diabetes:** A chronic condition in which the body’s cells are resistant to insulin. The pancreas may not produce enough insulin to overcome this resistance.

**Urine albumin:** A test that checks for small amounts of protein in the urine.