

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Controlling Your Diabetes

Ask your health care team how often and when to check your home blood glucose levels. Ask them how you can use the results to help control your diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is when the body's immune (im-YOON) system attacks an organ called the pancreas (PAN-kree-us). The pancreas can no longer make insulin (IN-suh-lin). The body needs insulin to turn glucose (sugar) into energy. If there is not enough insulin, the glucose stays in the blood.²

Type 2 Diabetes is when the body doesn't make enough insulin. People can develop Type 2 diabetes at any age. Being overweight and not being active raise the chances of getting Type 2 diabetes.³

If you have diabetes your health care team (doctor, nurse, dietician) has told you how important it is to¹:

- Make healthy food choices
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Exercise or be active every day

You and your health care team work out a treatment plan. Set goals for things like your blood glucose levels and how much to exercise. Together, make a meal plan so you know when and how much to eat.

Keeping Blood Glucose at Normal Levels

Following your plan helps you control your blood glucose levels. Check your glucose levels at home with self-tests. Following your plan also makes you feel better. When you keep your blood glucose close to a normal level you are more likely to¹:

- Heal better
- Have more energy and be less tired
- Have to pass urine less often
- Have fewer skin infections (in-FEK-shuns)
- Have fewer bladder infections
- Be less thirsty
- Have better health
- Have fewer problems with your eyes, feet, and gums

Keeping your blood sugar at a normal level may help you avoid serious problems like¹:

- Eye problems that can cause vision trouble or blindness
- Kidney problems that can cause your kidneys to stop working normally
- Nerve or circulation damage that can lead to losing a foot or a leg
- Heart attack and stroke
- Gum disease and loss of teeth



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If you are having trouble meeting the goals you and your doctor have set, let your health care team know. Your health care team may have a nurse, dietician, or diabetic educator. They have worked with many people who have diabetes. They may be able to give you tips that will make it easier for you to meet your goals.

The usual goal for LDL cholesterol is below 100.

The usual goal for HDL cholesterol is above 40.

Your doctor will tell you what your goals are.¹

Managing the “ABCs” of Diabetes

Doctors talk about the “ABCs” of diabetes:¹

- “A” is for A1C (A-one-C) test. This test is done in a lab.
- “B” is for blood pressure. This test is done in your doctor’s office.
- “C” is for cholesterol (ko-LES-ter-ol). This test is done in a lab.

Reaching your “ABC” goals is also a way to manage your diabetes. Ask your doctor about your “ABC” numbers. If you don’t know what the numbers mean, ask your doctor to explain.

A1C Test

This test shows what your blood glucose level has been over the past three months. You should have an A1C test at least two times a year.¹

The A1C goal for most people is less than 7. Your doctor will tell you what your goal is.¹

Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can cause heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.¹ Get your blood pressure checked at each doctor’s visit.

Your doctor may also ask you to check your blood pressure at home.¹

The usual goal for blood pressure is below 130/80. Your doctor will tell you what your goal is.¹

Cholesterol

LDL or “bad” cholesterol can clog your blood vessels. This can cause heart attack or stroke. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps get rid of the bad cholesterol.¹ Get your cholesterol checked at least once a year.

References

1. National Diabetes Education Program. 4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life. http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/4_Steps.pdf
2. KidsHealth. Type 1 Diabetes: What Is It? <http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/endocrine/type1.html>
3. NDIC. What Diabetes Is. <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/type1and2/what.htm>

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