

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Take Charge of Your Diabetes

Each time you see a member of your health care team, talk about how your treatment plan and meal plan are working for you. Bring in the written record of your blood glucose levels. It is important to keep this record and share it with your health care team. You and your health care team may need to make changes to the plan to make it work better for you.

When you have diabetes, making wise health choices every day is very important. The actions you take and the choices you make can help keep your blood sugar at normal levels. Keeping your blood sugar at normal levels helps prevent health problems caused by diabetes.¹

Ask your health care team for help and advice when you need it. The members of your team may include a²:

- Doctor
- Nurse
- Diabetes educator
- Dietician (DYE-uh-TISH-un)
- Pharmacist

You are an important member of the health care team.

Take charge of your health:

- Listen and learn. Make sure you understand the health advice you are given. Ask any member of your health care team to repeat something you don't understand. Take notes that you can look at later.
- Follow your diabetic action and treatment plan. Make your plan for diet, exercise, and blood tests with your doctor or nurse. Don't be afraid to speak up if you are worried about any part of the care plan.²
- Test your blood glucose levels as your doctor tells you to. Learn how to use your test results to adjust your food or exercise.²
- See your doctor for regular checkups.
- Think about joining a support group. Involve your family. This way you can learn how other people have dealt with some of the problems you are facing.



Take Charge of Your Diabetes

Exercise

Most people with diabetes should aim to get 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days. You might have to start slow and work your way up. Brisk walking counts!² Exercise and following your meal plan help you stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if you need to.

Mental Health

Sometimes talking to someone can make you feel better. If you feel down, ask for help. If you feel stressed, ask for help. Your doctor can give you the name of a counselor or support group. Stress can raise your blood glucose level. Learning ways to handle stress better improves your health.²

Diabetes Meal Plan

You and your health care team will design an easy meal plan for you to follow. If you don't have a meal plan, ask your doctor for one.² Each person's meal plan is different. General rules are:

- Avoid high-fat and high-sugar foods.³
- Eat foods that have less salt.²
- Choose fish, lean meats, and chicken or turkey without the skin.²
- Keep portions of lean meat, chicken, and turkey to about 3 ounces. This is about the size of a deck of cards. Instead of frying—bake, broil, or grill.²
- Eat foods with more fiber. Choose vegetables, dried beans, fruit, and oatmeal.²

Other Ways to Take Care of Yourself

Here are some other things you can do to improve your health²:

- Stop smoking. Ask your doctor for help if you have trouble quitting.
- Check your blood sugar every day as your doctor orders.
- Take your diabetes medicines even if you feel good. Let your doctor know if you can't afford your medicine.
- Brush your teeth and floss every day. This helps prevent problems with your mouth, teeth, and gums.
- Check your feet every day. Look for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. If you have sores that don't go away, call your doctor right away. Carefully trim your toenails.
- See your eye doctor regularly. Let your doctor know if you have any changes in your eyesight.
- Keep all of your doctor appointments.

References

1. NIDDK. Diabetes Control and Complications Trial (DCCT). <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/control/>
2. National Diabetes Education Program. 4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life. http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/4_Steps.pdf
3. CDC. Take Charge Of Your Diabetes. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/tctcd.pdf>

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