

# DIABETES MANAGEMENT

CONTROLLING DIABETES ONE STEP AT A TIME

START *Smart* FOR YOUR HEALTH

# DIABETES MANAGEMENT

## CONTROLLING DIABETES ONE STEP AT A TIME

Welcome to our booklet—Diabetes Management—Controlling diabetes one step at a time. It tells you how to manage your health problem so that you can be as healthy as possible.

Read this booklet to learn about such topics as:

- Tests and exams to help you stay healthy now—and later
- How to keep track of all your health information
- Keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range
- Healthy choices to make every day
- How to stay positive and enjoy life

This booklet has 3 parts:

Part 1: Get started

Part 2: Be an active member of your healthcare team

Part 3: Take care of yourself every day

You can read the booklet from cover to cover, or use the table of contents to direct you to the areas you want to learn about first. Keep your booklet in a handy place to pull out now and again. Practice the tips we offer and soon you'll see that you can control your diabetes—for life.

This guide is for people ages 17 and up with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. You'll see up-to-date advice from medical experts. You'll learn how others with blood sugar problems are tackling living well with diabetes. They did it—you can too!

# WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>Living well with diabetes .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1: Get started .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Learn about diabetes .....	6
A quick look inside your body .....	7
2 main types of diabetes.....	8
Get motivated to control your diabetes.....	8
<b>Part 2: Be an active member of your healthcare team .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Get needed tests. ....	10
Blood sugar test.....	10
ABC (A1C, Blood Pressure, and Cholesterol) tests. ....	16
Get other needed tests .....	20
How often to get tested.....	21
Get needed shots .....	21
Ask questions about your health.....	21
Track your health information.....	21
Discuss your results and make a treatment plan.....	22
<b>Part 3: Take care of yourself every day .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Control your blood sugar .....	23
Prevent blood sugar problems .....	23
When your blood sugar gets too high.....	23
When your blood sugar gets too low. ....	24
Take extra care of blood sugar when you're sick.....	25
Take your medicine.....	26
Choose healthy habits. ....	26
Eat a healthy diet.....	26
Stay active .....	35
Lower stress .....	42
Quit smoking. ....	45
<b>Controlling your diabetes for life.....</b>	<b>47</b>
Ask the doctor .....	47
Your diabetes care checklist.....	51

# LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

## COPING

“No one likes having health issues. And having diabetes can be tough—but it won’t define who I am. I love spending time with friends and living life to the fullest. That means taking steps to manage blood sugar—checking my levels, setting goals with my doctor, getting needed exams on time. It isn’t always easy—but then again feeling good means being able to do the things I enjoy.”

*Ray*

## MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

“I’m 26 and found out I had Type 1 diabetes when I was just 9. My friends ate whatever they wanted, when they wanted. As a kid that got to me. Now, as a new wife I know that keeping my blood sugar in the normal range lowers my chance of getting other health problems. It means being able to enjoy more good times with my husband. I feel well and feel in control of my life.”

*Megan*

## DENIAL

“Last winter, I learned I had diabetes. At first, I just kept on like nothing was different—didn’t plan ahead when I was going to work out. I checked my blood sugar—but not often enough. I admit I wasn’t too good about medicine either. That caught up to me real quick. After I passed out at work from low blood sugar, I started paying attention to when I ate and what I was eating. I wasted almost a year denying when I could have been dealing with my health. At least I am on track now.”

*Billy*

## TAKING SMALL STEPS

“Sometimes keeping up with all I need to do is too much. So, I keep a notebook with lists of the most important things I need to do to manage my blood sugar. I am overweight, so staying active and sticking to my meal plan is my main priority these days. I find taking it slow works. And it feels so good to check things off my list. It feels like I am making progress.”

*Arnie*

## STAYING ON TRACK

“Hands down, the best thing I ever did to keep my blood sugar in the right range was to put together a folder. I keep all my lab reports, papers from the doctor, and low-fat recipes in this 3-ring binder with pockets. I write down my blood sugar every time I take it.

I even keep a small pocket calendar to track all my upcoming appointments. Now, instead of waiting until late in the fall, I get my flu shot the first week the vaccine comes out. I get my eyes checked, urine tests—you name it. It is easy to remember when everything is in one place. My health? It is a precious thing. I am going to be around to see my grandbabies grow.”

*Vi*

## REACHING OUT

"I am not into pity parties. Still I was starting to feel very overwhelmed a few months back. Stress at work really messes with my blood sugar. Working long hours at my job and raising two teens can be a real roller coaster ride at times. I knew I had to take care of the home front or face getting sicker. Now the kids help with chores and they do the dishes most nights. I get to relax a little after work. We are all calmer now and I can concentrate on managing my blood sugar better."

*Noelle*

What does living well with blood sugar problems mean for you?

**We wish you much success as you take action to live well with diabetes. Turn to the next section to get started.**

# PART 1:

## GET STARTED

Are you ready to take charge of your diabetes? Do you want to be as healthy as possible? This section helps you get started by taking these steps:

- Learn about diabetes.
- Get motivated to control your diabetes.

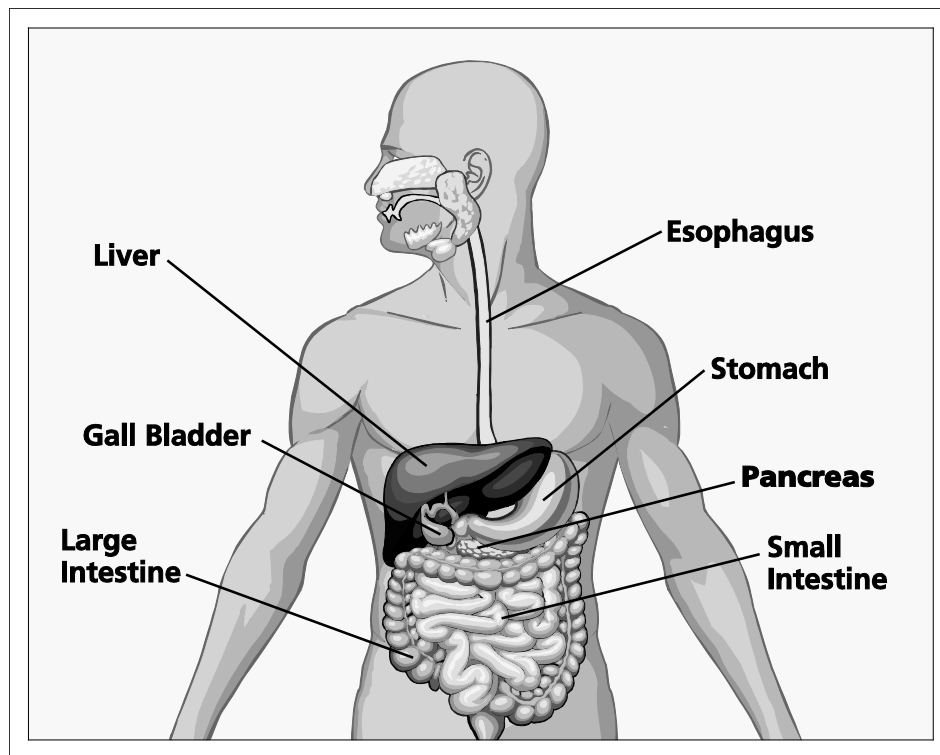
## LEARN ABOUT DIABETES

The first step in controlling your diabetes is learning about it. Diabetes is a disease that causes high blood sugar. When your blood sugar isn't under control, you can feel sick. Down the road, not controlling diabetes can also damage the blood supply to your heart, kidneys, eyes, and nerves. Uncontrolled blood sugar can also lead to heart disease and stroke. It can cause kidney failure, nerve damage, and blindness.

The good news? Making small changes now to keep good blood sugar levels can help you slow down or even prevent serious health problems.

## A QUICK LOOK INSIDE YOUR BODY

1. When you eat, your body breaks down the food into blood sugar, also called glucose. The sugar travels through your bloodstream and through your body. Insulin helps get blood sugar into the cells for energy.
2. Your pancreas is a little gland behind your stomach that makes a hormone called insulin. Insulin in your body helps get blood sugar into your cells for energy.
3. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or it doesn't use insulin the right way.
4. When the sugar doesn't get into your cells, your blood sugar levels go up—or stay high. This can make you sick or cause you to have health problems.



## THERE ARE 2 MAIN TYPES OF DIABETES—TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2

**About Type 1 diabetes:** Type 1 is most often found during childhood or the teen years—although it can begin when you are an adult.

With Type 1, your pancreas does not make enough or any insulin and this results in a rise in blood sugar. Insulin helps your body use glucose from food for energy. People with Type 1 need to inject insulin every day.

**About Type 2 diabetes:** Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes—in fact, 9 out of 10 people with diabetes have Type 2. Type 2 diabetes usually starts in adulthood and is linked with obesity.

With Type 2, your body does not make enough insulin or your body is unable to use insulin well. This makes your blood sugar too high. You may need to take medicine or insulin to lower your blood sugar levels. Losing weight if you are overweight, being active, and eating on a meal plan can help keep your blood sugar levels in a normal range. This can allow you to get off medicines or insulin.

## GESTATIONAL DIABETES

Some women get diabetes when they are pregnant. This type is called gestational (jes-TAY-shun-ul) diabetes. It's not as common as Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. Some women who have diabetes while pregnant have a greater chance of getting Type 2 diabetes 5 to 10 years after they give birth. Your OB/GYN can help you manage gestational diabetes.

## GET MOTIVATED TO CONTROL YOUR DIABETES

There are lots of good reasons to control your diabetes. When your blood glucose (blood sugar) is close to normal, you may find that you:

- Have more energy and feel less tired
- Are less thirsty
- Urinate (pee) less often and have fewer bladder infections
- Heal better and have fewer skin infections
- Have fewer problems with your eyesight, feet, and gums

## CALVIN WANTS TO BE HEALTHY

“My nurse suggested I write down the reasons I want to control my diabetes. I am not one who usually keeps lists—but I thought I would give this list thing a try. I discovered that being around for my kids, making sure I don't lose a foot or leg, and keeping my vision are my top reasons. I pull this list out of my wallet whenever I get discouraged or feel down. I want to feel good and be well.”

## RENEE WANTS TO HAVE MORE ENERGY

“The women in my church group formed a walking club, and we meet up at the church. There are six other women with sugar problems, so we take it a bit slower than the rest of the ladies. We've been walking for 5 weeks now, and I am up to 30 minutes three times a week. I feel more energy on the days I walk.”



## **J.C. WANTS TO STOP LITTLE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BECOME BIG ONES**

“Plain and simple—I don’t want to wait until I am so sick from this disease that my choices are limited. I check my feet every day. I am not going to let a cut get so infected that it won’t heal well. Do the daily foot checks—they only take a minute. Test your blood and write down the results. Get your blood pressure checked at each visit. Get the urine and eye tests on time. Be the first one in line for the flu shot. It makes good sense to get the care you need before a health problem gets out of hand.”

## **CHECK OFF WHY YOU WANT TO CONTROL YOUR DIABETES**

I want to control my diabetes:

- ☐ To feel well
- ☐ To keep my eyes, kidneys, feet, and blood vessels healthy
- ☐ To prevent ending up in the ER with blood sugar that is too high or too low

List your reasons here:

# **PART 2:**

## **BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM**

Your healthcare team is made up of your doctor, dentist, eye doctor, foot doctor—and you. The goal of your healthcare team is to control your diabetes so that you will stay as healthy as possible.

This section explains how to be an active member of your healthcare team by taking these steps:

- Get needed tests.
- Ask questions about your health.
- Track your health information.
- Discuss your results and make a treatment plan.

### **GET NEEDED TESTS**

It is absolutely crucial that you get certain tests. They give your healthcare team the facts they need in order to control your diabetes.

#### **BLOOD SUGAR TEST**

This is a daily test. You will use a blood glucose meter to check your blood sugar at least one time a day. Your doctor may ask you to test it more often, such as before meals and again 1 to 2 hours after you start your meal. Talk to your doctor about the best times to test.

#### **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR**

Here are some questions to ask your doctor about testing blood sugar.

How should I use the meter?

How often should I test my blood sugar?

When is the best time to test my blood sugar during the day?

#### **TIP:**

Make sure you order strips or pick them up from the pharmacy before you run out.

## WHAT ARE GOOD BLOOD SUGAR NUMBERS FOR A PERSON WITH DIABETES?

This chart shows blood sugar target levels for most people with diabetes.

<b>Before meals</b>	70 to 130 mg/dl
<b>1 to 2 hours after the start of your meal</b>	Less than 180 mg/dl

### BLOOD SUGAR GOAL

Talk to your doctor and set a blood sugar goal together. Strive to keep your blood sugar in that range.

Write your blood sugar goal here:

## YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LOG

Take these steps to use the blood sugar log on this page:

Make photocopies of the record page. Each time you take your blood sugar, write it down.

Use the log as a way to track your numbers. Take it with you when you visit your healthcare provider. There are enough spaces for an entire month.

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

Date

Before Breakfast #

Lunch #

Dinner #

Bedtime #

## ABC (A1C, BLOOD PRESSURE, AND CHOLESTEROL) TESTS

“It’s now second nature for me to remember the tests I need to have done and when to do them. I just think ‘ABC’—and know that keeping these areas in check helps me manage my health. I believe that getting these tests on time is probably one of the best steps a person with diabetes can take. I want to know what’s going on so I can do something about it before health problems get out of control. In my view— why wait?”

*Ellen*



# **YOU MAY HAVE HEARD YOUR PROVIDER OR OTHERS TALK ABOUT THE DIABETES ABCS. HERE'S WHAT THE A, B, AND C STAND FOR:**

**A** is for the A1C test. Sometimes it is also called the HbA1C test.

**B** is for blood pressure check.

**C** is for cholesterol test.

## **A IS FOR THE HEMOGLOBIN A1C (A-ONE-C) TEST**

The A1C test shows you what your blood glucose (blood sugar) has been over the last 2 or 3 months. When you test your blood sugar one or more times a day, you only get your blood sugar level at that time. The A1C test gives you an overall view of your blood sugar levels.

### **WHY IS THE A1C TEST IMPORTANT?**

High blood sugar levels can harm your heart, kidneys, eyes, and feet. The A1C test, along with testing your blood sugar at home with your meter, can show if your blood sugar is under control.

You should get the A1C test 1 or 2 times a year to find out if your blood sugar is in a healthy range. If it is too high, you and your doctor can make a plan to lower it.

### **WHAT IS A GOOD A1C NUMBER FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?**

The goal for most people with diabetes is to keep their A1C below 7%.

## WHAT DOES YOUR NUMBER MEAN?

Read the chart below to get an idea of what your A1C numbers mean.

### WHAT YOUR A1C RESULTS MEAN

Your A1C Results	Your Estimated Average Blood Glucose (eAG)
If your A1C is 6%	Your eAG is 126 mg/dl Good job!
If your A1C is 6.5%	Your eAG is 140 mg/dl
If your A1C is 7%	Your eAG is 154 mg/dl
If your A1C is 7.5%	Your eAG is 169 mg/dl
If your A1C is 8%	Your eAG is 183 mg/dl This is too high.
If your A1C is 8.5%	Your eAG is 197 mg/dl This is too high.
If your A1C is 9%	Your eAG is 212 mg/dl This is too high.
If your A1C is 9.5%	Your eAG is 226 mg/dl This is too high.
If your A1C is 10%	Your eAG is 240 mg/dl This is too high.

Write your A1C results here:

Date:

## B IS FOR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK

A blood pressure check measures the force of blood against your artery walls.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED?

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. This can damage your eyes, kidneys, heart, and blood vessels. It can cause heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

Have your blood pressure checked at each visit. Check it more often if your doctor says you should. This test lets you make sure your blood pressure stays in a healthy range. If it is too high, you and your doctor can make a plan to lower it.

### WHAT ARE GOOD BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?

People with diabetes should keep their blood pressure lower than 130/80 mmHg. This is said “130 over 80.”

## WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

Let's look at this goal of 130/80.

130 The top number is called the systolic pressure. That's the force of blood against artery walls during heartbeats.

80 The bottom number is called the diastolic pressure. That's the force of blood against artery walls between heartbeats.

Ask your healthcare provider to write the numbers down for you or to repeat them so you can write them down.

## WHAT CAN HELP LOWER HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Regular exercise and eating less salt have helped many people with diabetes keep their blood pressure below 130/80. If your blood pressure is too high, your doctor may want you to take medicine to help lower it.

**Write your blood pressure goal here:**

## C IS FOR CHOLESTEROL TEST

Your doctor will do a simple blood test to find out the levels of certain fats in your blood. This test is called a lipoprotein profile, or cholesterol test. It measures your LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides (trigs).

### WHY GET A CHOLESTEROL TEST?

High cholesterol clogs your arteries. This can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease, kidney failure, and going blind. If an artery to your heart gets clogged, you could have a heart attack. If an artery to your brain gets clogged, you could have a stroke.

You should get a cholesterol test 1 or 2 times a year. This test lets you keep an eye on your total blood cholesterol. If your cholesterol gets too high, you and your doctor can make a plan to lower it.

### LDL CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a type of fat found in your blood. LDL is sometimes called "bad" cholesterol. It can build up in your artery walls and clog your arteries. The arteries are tubes that carry blood through your body. Most people with diabetes should keep their LDL cholesterol below 100 mg/dL.

### HDL CHOLESTEROL

HDL is known as "good cholesterol." It helps keep your arteries from getting clogged. Most people with diabetes should keep their HDL cholesterol above 40 mg/dL.

### TRIGLYCERIDES (TRIGS)

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in the blood. They can clog up your arteries. Most people with diabetes should keep their trigs below 150 mg/dL.

### TOTAL BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

Together, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and trigs make up total blood cholesterol. Having a high total blood cholesterol increases your risk of clogged arteries. Most people with diabetes should keep their total blood cholesterol below 200 mg/dL.

## WHAT ARE GOOD CHOLESTEROL TEST NUMBERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?

Your LDL cholesterol should be below 100.

Your HDL cholesterol should be above 50 if you are a woman. It should be above 40 if you are a man.

Your triglycerides should be below 150.

Your total blood cholesterol should be below 200.

Write your cholesterol test numbers here:

LDL

HDL

Triglycerides (trigs)

Total blood cholesterol

Remember:

- Talk to your healthcare team about how to use the A1C (blood glucose or blood sugar) test, blood pressure check, and cholesterol test to manage your diabetes.
- Try to keep your numbers for these tests at healthy levels. This will help lower your chances of having a heart attack, a stroke, or other diabetes problems.

## GET OTHER NEEDED TESTS

You should also get these tests:

- Dental exam to check your teeth and gums. Make sure to tell your dentist you have diabetes.
- Dilated eye exam to check your sight and look at your retinas.
- Foot check to make sure your feet are healthy. Take care of your feet between visits by doing a daily foot check (see page 49).
- Urine and blood tests to see how well your kidneys are working. The urine test measures protein. The blood test measures creatinine.

“I keep all my lab results in my binder, and it is thrilling to see my numbers get closer to the target I set with my doctor. I made a few changes in my meals and ended up losing some extra weight too. Now I broil all my lean meats instead of deep frying or pan frying. And I make sure I eat mostly green vegetables and just a little starchy rice or potatoes. My doctor says if I keep it up and add a little exercise I might be able to get off my cholesterol medicines soon. That is certainly something to look forward to.”

*Benton*

## HOW OFTEN TO GET TESTED

Get these screening tests at each doctor visit:

- Blood pressure check
- Foot check

Get these screening tests 1 or 2 times a year, each year:

- A1C test
- Cholesterol test
- Dental exam
- Dilated eye exam
- Urine and blood tests

## GET NEEDED SHOTS

You should also get these shots:

- Flu vaccine to prevent the seasonal flu or any new flu strains.
- Pneumonia shot to prevent pneumonia. Ask your doctor how often you should get it. People who are 64 years old and over should get a shot if it has been more than 5 years since their last shot.

## ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

Getting needed tests is a great first step, but it's not enough. In order to be an active member of your healthcare team, you need to ask lots and lots of questions!

"I believe that knowledge is power. Read this booklet and other materials your doctor gives you. Then, talk to your health team and ask questions. If you don't understand something your doctor is saying, ask more questions. Learning to manage with diabetes can be a lot to take in at once. I found that learning all I can about blood sugar control is helping me feel better."

*Shellie*

## TRACK YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

Keep all your health information in a single 3-ring binder with pockets. Having everything in one place will allow you to find items quickly. This helps you be an active member of your healthcare team.

## WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR BINDER

You can include such items as:

- Appointment cards
- Blood sugar log (see page 11)
- Exercise log (see page 38)
- Lab slips
- Meal plan (see page 27)
- Medicine schedule (see page 26)
- Notebook

## USE A NOTEBOOK

**It's a good idea to keep a notebook handy. Put it by your bed. Carry it with you during the day.**

"I keep a notebook with me all the time. I write down questions for doctors, plus their answers. I also write down how I'm feeling—including any problems I'm having. Really, anything I might want to talk about with my health team. I bring the notebook with me to doctor visits."

*Angie*

## DISCUSS YOUR RESULTS AND MAKE A TREATMENT PLAN

You and your healthcare team will go over your test results. Based on the results and any symptoms you are having, you and your team may change your treatment plan. The plan may include:

- Your medicine schedule
- Your meal plan
- Your exercise plan

"Lab slips can be really confusing. So I always call my doctor and keep asking questions until I understand what all the results mean. Then we discuss what I need to do in my life to get my levels back in a healthy range."

*Gerry*

### REMEMBER:

Your doctor may not talk to your dentist. Your dentist may not talk to your eye doctor. Your eye doctor may not talk to your foot doctor. You are the only one who talks to all the members of your healthcare team. That's why it's so important for you to be an active player.

Turn to the next section to learn how to take care of yourself every day.

# PART 3:

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF EVERY DAY

A healthy lifestyle lets you control your diabetes so that you will stay as healthy as possible. This section tells how to take care of yourself every day by taking these steps:

- Control your blood sugar.
- Take your medicine.
- Choose healthy habits—eat well, stay active, lower stress, and quit smoking.

“I used to eat fast food. I used to smoke a pack a day. I never walked anywhere I didn’t have to. When I found out I had diabetes, I knew I had to turn myself around. It was hard, but I just took it slowly, a little at a time. And now a healthy lifestyle is second nature to me.”

*Maya*

## CONTROL YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

One way to take care of yourself is to make sure your blood sugar stays in a healthy range.

## PREVENT BLOOD SUGAR PROBLEMS

Try to keep your blood sugar from getting too high or too low. Try these tips:

- Eat about the same amount of food each day.
- Eat all your meals. Don’t skip meals.
- Eat your meals and snacks at around the same time each day.
- Take your medicines at the same time each day.

## WHEN YOUR BLOOD SUGAR GETS TOO HIGH

If your blood sugar stays above 180 mg/dl, it may be too high. This is called hyperglycemia.

## THINGS THAT MAKE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR GO UP

Your blood sugar levels may go up if you:

- Are sick or have infections
- Are under stress
- Eat certain foods—sweets, sugary sodas, juices, too many carbs (carbohydrates)
- Miss your diabetes medicines or don’t take them the right way
- Take some medicines for other health problems

If your blood sugar is high much of the time, call your doctor.

## WHEN YOUR BLOOD SUGAR GETS TOO LOW

When blood sugar goes below 70 mg/dl, you have low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia. Low blood sugar can make you feel sick. Very low levels can become a medical emergency.

### THINGS THAT MAKE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR GO DOWN

Your blood sugar levels may go down if you:

- Are too physically active without eating enough before you exercise
- Don't eat before you inject insulin, or wait too long after you eat to inject insulin
- Don't take your medicines the right way
- Drink alcohol
- Take some diabetes medicines or other medicines
- Wait too long to eat, or skip meals or snacks

### SIGNS OF LOW BLOOD SUGAR

If you have low blood sugar, you may:

- Be sleepy
- Feel confused, or have trouble thinking
- Feel dizzy or light-headed
- Feel hungry
- Feel nervous, anxious, or shaky
- Have a headache
- Sweat, or break out in a cold sweat

"I bought a medical ID at the pharmacy and always wear it when I go out. No exceptions—because it could be a true lifesaver in a medical emergency."

*Georgia Lee*

### HOW TO TREAT LOW BLOOD SUGAR

Feeling any of the signs of low blood sugar? Check your blood glucose, or ask someone to help you if needed.

If your blood sugar is less than 70 mg/dl, drink or eat one of the following:

- 3 or 4 glucose tablets
- 1 serving of glucose gel—the amount equal to 15 grams of carbohydrates
- ½ cup (4 ounces) of any fruit juice
- ½ cup (4 ounces) of a regular (not diet) soft drink
- 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk
- 5 or 6 pieces of hard candy
- 1 tablespoon of sugar or honey



## **TEACH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHAT TO DO ABOUT LOW BLOOD SUGAR**

If your sugar gets very low, you could have a seizure or pass out. Teach your family and friends what to do if you can't treat yourself during a severe low blood sugar attack. If you can't talk or swallow, they shouldn't put food, candy, or liquids in your mouth. This may cause choking. Instead, they can squeeze glucose gel into the side of your cheek. Squeezing it toward the back of your throat could make you choke.

If your blood sugar is very low, call your doctor.

## **TAKE EXTRA CARE OF BLOOD SUGAR WHEN YOU'RE SICK**

Being sick can make your blood glucose get too high or too low. So take these steps when you're sick:

- Check your blood glucose level every 4 hours. Write down the results.
- Keep taking your diabetes medicines. You need them even if you can't keep food down.
- Drink at least 1 cup (8 ounces) of water or other calorie-free, caffeine-free liquid every hour while you're awake.
- If you can't eat your usual food, try drinking juice or eating crackers, popsicles, or soup. If you can't eat at all, drink clear liquids, such as ginger ale. You still need calories. If you don't get enough, you increase your risk of low blood sugar.
- If you have Type 1 diabetes, your body makes ketones. If your blood glucose is high, ketones can make you sick. Test your urine or blood for ketones if:
  - Your blood glucose is above 240
  - You can't keep food or liquids down

## **WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR**

Call your healthcare provider right away if:

- Your blood glucose has been above 240 for longer than a day
- You have ketones
- You feel sleepier than usual
- You have trouble breathing
- You can't think clearly
- You throw up more than once
- You've had diarrhea for more than 6 hours

## TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

Taking your medicine as prescribed is another way to take care of yourself. You may take medicine for:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Other health problems

“I have so many pills to keep track of. It was easy to make a mistake. My daughter bought me one of those boxes with the days of the week on it. Now I fill up the box at the start of each week and take the pills each day. It keeps me on track.”

*Sue*

## YOUR MEDICINE SCHEDULE

Use this medicine schedule to keep track of each medicine you take. Keep it in your 3-ring binder.

Name of medicine (brand name or generic name)

How much I take each day

When I take it

## USE YOUR NOTEBOOK

In your notebook, write down any side effects you may be having. Tell your doctor about them.

## CHOOSE HEALTHY HABITS

Another way to take care of yourself is to choose healthy habits. That means eating a healthy diet, being active, and lowering your stress. If you smoke, you should quit.

## EAT A HEALTHY DIET

Eating right is a healthy habit. When you have diabetes, every bite counts. Making wise food choices can:

- Help you feel better
- Help you lose weight if you are overweight
- Keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol in a healthy range
- Lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other health problems

“At first I thought I could eyeball serving sizes. But when I actually measured and weighed my foods I saw that I was eating much more than a serving.

Now I keep measuring cups, measuring spoons, and a food scale right on my kitchen counter. Measuring keeps me right on track with the right amount for healthy eating and portion control. I also use smaller plates. That little trick means my plate looks fuller.”

*Rick*

## YOUR MEAL PLAN

Work with your healthcare team to create a meal plan that keeps your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol under control. Make sure the plan works for you and your lifestyle.

Your meal plan will say:

- What to eat
- How much to eat
- When to eat

## HEALTHY EATING FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Check off the healthy eating habits you'd like to try. Pick one new habit this week and add another habit in a week or two. In time add more of the habits listed below. Soon healthy eating will be second nature to you.

### LIMITING THE AMOUNT OF SWEETS I EAT

- ☐ I'll choose foods that are lower in sugar and avoid sugary drinks.

### EATING THE RIGHT PORTIONS

- ☐ I will learn what makes a serving size for different foods.
- ☐ I'll find out how many servings I need at each meal.

### EATING MORE WHOLE GRAINS, FRUITS, AND VEGETABLES

- ☐ I'll throw black beans into salads.
- ☐ I'll make sure that veggies like spinach take up half my plate.
- ☐ I'll choose whole-grain pastas and breads.

### EATING LESS FAT AND SALT

- ☐ I'll choose foods lower in fat and use less fat when I cook.
- ☐ I'll choose skinless chicken instead of bacon.
- ☐ I'll take the salt shaker off my table and use herbs and spices to add flavor to foods.

### TALKING TO MY DOCTOR ABOUT SAFE AMOUNTS TO DRINK, IF ANY

- ☐ I'll limit the amount of wine, beer, and liquor I drink based on my doctor's suggestions.
- ☐ I'll ask my doctor for help quitting or cutting back if I am drinking more than is healthy.

## A QUICK LOOK AT FOOD

Food has calories that you need for energy. It also has vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates, and proteins.

### WHAT ARE CARBS?

Carbs are in foods like bread, rice, and pasta. They are in starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, and peas. Carbs are also in fruit and in dairy products such as milk and yogurt.

### WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT CARBS?

You need to be careful about carbohydrates—the type you eat, how much you eat, and when you eat them. Here's why:

- Your body breaks down carbs to make sugar for energy.
- When you have diabetes, the more carbs you eat, the more your blood sugar level can rise.

You don't have to give up carbs. But you do need to watch portion sizes. And you should choose carbs that are high in fiber.

### CHOOSE HIGH-FIBER CARBS

High-fiber carbs can be a healthy part of your diet. Good choices include:

- 100% whole grain bread, tortillas, and pasta
- Brown rice
- Fresh fruits that are lower in sugar (see page 30)
- Oatmeal
- Vegetables that have less carbs (see page 29)
- Whole-grain cereals

"All you hear about is fiber, fiber, fiber. It is on TV and in every magazine you pick up. Wondering how you can add more fiber to your meal plan? It is not as tough as you might think. First, choose whole grains. Pick 100% whole grain cereals. Bran cereal is a good choice. Some days I'll eat oatmeal—only I use a sugar substitute. I switched to brown rice, and whole wheat breads and tortillas. Pretty soon white bread will be a food in your past. And know something? You won't miss it."

*Daniel*

## GET YOUR VEGETABLES

Eat a variety of vegetables each day. Just make sure they are low in starch.

## CHOOSE LOW-STARCH VEGGIES

Here are some veggies that are low in starch. Check off the vegetables you'd like to try:

- ☐ Asparagus
- ☐ Broccoli
- ☐ Brussels sprouts
- ☐ Cabbage—green, red, or purple
- ☐ Carrots—raw
- ☐ Cauliflower
- ☐ Celery
- ☐ Cucumbers
- ☐ Green beans
- ☐ Greens—including turnip, collard and mustard greens
- ☐ Mushrooms
- ☐ Okra
- ☐ Onions
- ☐ Peppers—red, green, and yellow
- ☐ Radishes
- ☐ Romaine lettuce
- ☐ Spinach
- ☐ Summer squash—green and yellow
- ☐ Tomatoes
- ☐ Turnips

## TIPS FOR CHOOSING AND USING VEGETABLES

Try these tips:

- If you have high blood pressure, choose fresh and frozen veggies. Some canned veggies have a lot of salt in them.
- Steam or grill your veggies. Or cook them in a non-stick pan with a little olive or canola oil. Avoid cooking in butter or lard.
- Top your veggies with low-fat salad dressing, lemon juice, vinegar, and herbs. Beware of creamy or cheesy sauces.

“Steaming my vegetables is really easy. I put them on a plate and cover them with a plastic lid. Then I microwave them for a minute or two and add some herbs for flavor. I find most restaurants will steam for you without butter or sauces if you ask.”

*Jorge*

## FRUIT CAN BE FINE

Fruit can be high in sugar, so it can raise your blood sugar. But that doesn't mean you need to give up fruit. Just make sure the fruit you choose is high in fiber and low in sugar.

Follow these simple rules:

- Choose citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruits and tangerines. These are lower in sugar.
- Eat whole pieces of fruit instead of drinking fruit juice. Whole fruit has more fiber.
- Choose plain fruit and fruit juice. Read the label to make sure they have no added sugar or corn syrup.

“I'm a fruit lover. It was very hard to limit the amount I ate. Now I have cut-up oranges and tangerines in the fridge. I even have frozen orange sections and nibble on them while watching TV. It makes a great evening snack.”

*Gustov*

## PROTEIN IS IMPORTANT

Protein is found in animal products—meat, eggs, and dairy. It's also found in beans and tofu. The key with protein is to watch your fat intake. So choose lean meats and nonfat and low-fat dairy.

## CHOOSE LEAN MEAT

Good choices include:

- White-meat turkey and chicken without the skin
- Fish
- Lean parts of beef, veal, pork and wild game without the fat

## TIPS FOR COOKING MEAT

Broil, grill, bake, or roast meat. Avoid frying.

## CHOOSE NONFAT AND LOW-FAT DAIRY

Good choices include:

- Fat-free (skim) or 1% milk
- Reduced-fat cheese
- Nonfat or 1% cottage cheese
- Nonfat or low-fat yogurt with no added sugar or corn syrup

"I'm at the point where I love skim milk. Whole milk seems too thick to drink now. And who needs the extra fat when skim has plenty of flavor? And fried foods? I just don't miss them now that I put a little gas grill in the back. Sometimes I even fire up the grill and barbeque some fish or chicken in the dead of winter. There's snow on the ground and I'm fixing my lean meals. My neighbors joke about it all the time."

*Roberto*

## TAKE CARE WITH FATS, SWEETS, AND ALCOHOL

- Avoid foods that are high in fat, especially saturated fat.
- Avoid foods with a lot of sugar, corn syrup, or carbohydrates, since they can raise your blood sugar. These include sweets, juice, and soda.
- Ask your doctor if there is a safe amount of alcohol for you to drink. Some people with sugar problems should not drink at all. If you do drink alcohol, drink less and have it with meals.

## A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT THE FOOD PYRAMID

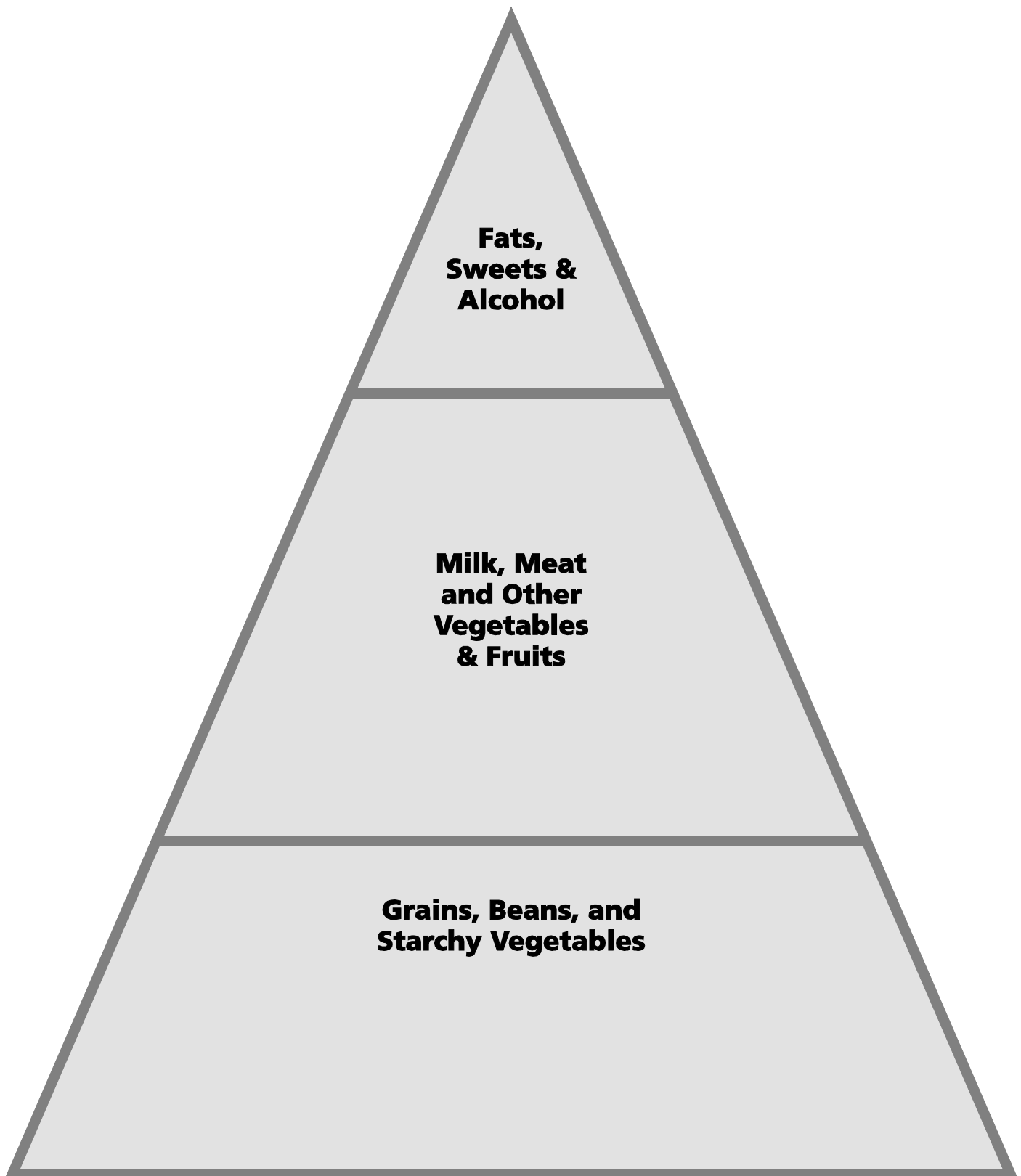
The food pyramid on the next page offers you an at-a-glance plan for eating well with diabetes. Photocopy this page and hang it on your fridge as a quick reminder! Choose fewer foods from the top and more from the middle and lower parts of the pyramid.

- Avoid sweets because they have a lot of fat and sugar.
- If you do eat sweets, choose healthy ones.
- Eat less fat.
- Eat less saturated fat, which is found in meat, cheese, and butter.
- Saturated fat is usually solid at room temperature.
- Check with your healthcare team to see what a safe amount of alcohol is for you.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, drink less and have it with meals.

Eat low-fat or nonfat milk and yogurt. Choose yogurt with no added sugar or corn syrup.

- Eat more fish, chicken and turkey. Take off the skin.
- Eat lean parts of beef, veal, pork, and wild game. Trim off the fat.
- Grill, boil, bake, or roast instead of frying.
- Eat fresh or frozen vegetables.
- Avoid salt, fats, and sauces.
- Avoid starchy vegetables.
- Choose high-fiber vegetables, such as spinach, broccoli, romaine, carrots, chilies, and peppers.
- Eat whole fruits instead of juice to get more fiber.
- Eat fruit and fruit juice with no added sugar or corn syrup.
- Eat low-sugar fruits like oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines.
- Eat whole grains, such as whole-grain bread, crackers, and tortillas. Eat bran cereal, brown rice, and bulgur. They are high in fiber and nutritious.
- Eat beans, since they are high in fiber.
- Choose whole-grain flours when baking.
- Eat low-fat breads like bagels, English muffins, and pita bread. Try pretzels or low-fat crackers as snacks.





“I just found out I have high blood sugar and I need to watch what I eat to keep my sugar under control. My doctor gave me a list of suggested meals. I found it very helpful and easy to use. Until I get the hang of my new eating habits, I’m planning on referring to my menu ideas often. A bonus is that the suggested menus help me when I make out my grocery list each week.”

*Valerie*

## **TIPS FOR EATING OUT**

**Try these tips that have worked for other people with blood sugar problems.**

“For low-fat choices, I always look for the words broil, bake, grilled, or charbroiled. And I ask that they leave off any sauces or butter—only herbs.”

*Paul*

“I still like to go out to eat with friends. It used to be a temptation—but now, I just keep saying to myself—nothing tastes as good as healthy feels. When my friends order dessert, I may take one bite if it is something I truly love. But more often than not I am content sipping an iced tea with double lemon and a sugar substitute.”

*Mia*

“Making small changes—like using skim milk instead of full fat cream in my coffee. Or having low-fat frozen yogurt in my freezer for a treat instead of ice cream. It didn’t happen overnight, but good eating habits are happening!”

*Steve*

“Know the best tip I got from my sister? She said to order low-fat salad dressing on the side and dip my fork in it, then grab a bite of salad. I use so much less dressing and get full flavor.”

*Ginnie*

## **TALK TO YOUR WAITER**

Tell the waiter about your meal plan. He or she might be able to point you toward some items on the menu. If not, ask if the restaurant can make something to order for you. If you find a restaurant that works for you, keep going there!

## **STUDY THE MENU**

Avoid food that is:

- Served in a cream sauce or creamed
- Fried or sautéed
- Scalloped or escalloped

Order lean meats, fish, and poultry. Look for the words:

- Baked or oven-baked
- Broiled
- Grilled
- Charbroiled

When ordering veggies, look for the words:

- Fresh
- Garden fresh
- Heart Healthy
- Steamed

## STAY ACTIVE

Staying active is another healthy habit. Do you have an exercise plan in place now? Good for you. If not, it's time to get started!

### WHAT'S KEEPING YOU FROM STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM?

Let's look at some roadblocks others had and some solutions that might work for you. Do any of these sound like you?

#### ROADBLOCK: I JUST DON'T LIKE TO EXERCISE!

Good news: There's something for everyone. Do you like to dance? Swim? Hike? Run around in the yard with your kids? Keep searching until you find something active that you like to do.

#### ROADBLOCK: I FEEL OVERWHELMED. I'VE BEEN INACTIVE FOR SO LONG, I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.

Good news: Start slowly. Build up over time. Even a little exercise is better than none! Start out by doing what you can. For example, walk 10 minutes once a day. Do it for a few weeks. Then add more time and more days. Walk a little faster each time. Soon you'll build your stamina. In a couple of months you might feel so good, you may want to add a new activity such as swimming or biking.

#### ROADBLOCK: I'M LOW ON CASH AND CAN'T ADD ON BIG EXPENSES RIGHT NOW.

Good news: Being active doesn't have to cost a lot of money.

- Grab a pair of tennis shoes and walk with a friend.
- Take a couple of soup cans or water bottles and use them as mini-weights for strength training.
- Pick up an exercise bike or treadmill at a second-hand shop or yard sale. Or find out if a neighbor wants to get rid of their old exercise equipment.
- Look into low-cost classes for older adults at senior centers.
- Find out if your place of worship offers club sports free of charge.
- Buy an exercise tape or work out to an exercise show on TV.
- Join a hiking club. They are usually free!

#### ROADBLOCK: I DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO EXERCISE.

Good news: Find ways to fit in fitness. Park your car at the far end of the parking lot. Get off your bus a few stops early. Take the stairs instead of riding the elevator. Walk during your lunchtime. Soon you'll find these changes add up.

## **ROADBLOCK: I WORRY ABOUT GETTING HURT OR GETTING MY SUGAR TOO LOW.**

Good news: You don't have to run a marathon to get the benefits of being active. Your doctor will help you come up with a plan that is right for you. Learn ways to watch for low blood sugar from exercise (see page 38).

## **ROADBLOCK: I'VE STARTED EXERCISE PROGRAMS BEFORE. BUT I HAVE TROUBLE STICKING WITH IT.**

Good news: Getting an exercise buddy can help you stay on track. People who are not keen on exercising often find that working out with a friend keeps them motivated. You get to spend time with your friend and you get healthier too. Whether you are walking at lunch or doing an exercise tape together in your living room, having a buddy can help keep you on track.

## **WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET ACTIVE?**

Check off why you want to exercise more.

I want to:

- ☐ Have more energy
- ☐ Keep my blood pressure under control
- ☐ Keep my blood sugar levels under control
- ☐ Lose weight
- ☐ Move around more easily
- ☐ Sleep better at night (it's true—being active can help you rest better at night!)
- ☐ Spend time with my family or friends

List your reason here:

## **HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU EXERCISE?**

If you haven't been active in a while, start slow. Work at a pace you are comfortable with. Build up over time.

Aim to be active most days of the week for 30 minutes. You don't have to do the 30 minutes all at once—you can break the time into 10-minute blocks.

## KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

It's important to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Ask your doctor these questions. Write down the answers.

Since I am taking diabetes medicines, when is the best time for me to exercise?

Will I need to take more or less medicine if I become more active?

Are there some exercises or activities I should avoid?

Should I check my blood sugar before I exercise?

Which stretching exercises are safe for me to do?

Which strength-training exercises are safe for me to do?

Which cardio (aerobic) exercises are safe for me to do?

## YOUR EXERCISE GOALS

How will you stay active? Write about your plan here. Discuss it with you doctor.

I will do this activity:

I will do it this often:

I will do it for this long each time:

## TAKE THESE STEPS EVERY TIME YOU EXERCISE

Before you exercise:

- Check your blood sugar if your doctor says you should.
- Bring a snack or your glucose tablets. This way you will be prepared to treat low blood sugar if you need to.
- Bring water to drink—especially in warm weather.
- Wear a medical ID and carry identification such as your license.

After you exercise:

- Check your blood sugar. If you find that it's lower than normal, talk to your doctor about eating before you work out.
- Keep track of how active you are. Write in your notebook, or use the exercise log on the next page.

To learn more about becoming more active, visit <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>. You can download the free brochure “Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.”

## MY EXERCISE LOG

Use this log to keep track of what you do to stay active each day. Keep it in your 3-ring binder.

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward



Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

Today's Date

What I did to stay active

How long I did it

How I felt afterward

## LOWER STRESS

Another healthy habit is lowering stress. When you cut stress in your life, you are better able to control your diabetes.

### LOWERING STRESS HELPS PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Being calmer and more relaxed may allow you to sleep better. You may have more time and energy to pay attention to your eating and test your blood sugar.

"I used to get stressed out a lot. I would lie awake a couple of times a week worrying about my job. I didn't have the energy to eat right. And I sometimes forgot to check my sugar as often as I should. Now that I know ways to calm myself down, I feel much better and I'm controlling my diabetes better."

*Alex*

### STRESS MAY AFFECT PEOPLE WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

Studies show that some people with Type 2 diabetes may be more affected by stress hormones than people without that health problem. Stress can block their body from releasing insulin.

### WAYS TO LOWER STRESS

Do you want to lower stress in your life? Try these methods that have helped others relax.

#### DEEP BREATHING

Take these steps:

- Pick a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your thighs with your palms turned up.
- Take in a deep breath.
- Breathe out. Let out as much air as you can.
- Take in a second deep breath and hold it for 10 seconds.
- Put your mouth in an "o" shape as though you were getting ready to blow up a balloon. Release the breath slowly to a count of 10. Blow out as much as you can.
- Repeat for 10 to 15 minutes.

## REPLACING “BAD” THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS WITH “GOOD” ONES

Many people find they can replace negative thoughts and feelings with positive ones. This helps lower stress.

Some people find praying or meditating helps them push away bad thoughts. Others say to themselves, “This will pass. I’ve done other tough things in my life. I can get through this time.” That simple statement or another one that works for you can help you stop negative thoughts in their tracks.

If you find the negative thoughts are not going away, or that you have been very sad or depressed for two or more weeks—tell your doctor, or talk to a trained counselor.

“When my younger sister suggested the power of positive thoughts, all I could think was it is easy for her to say that because she doesn’t have health issues. Truth is, I sort of snapped at her. Then she showed me this article about how you can turn around negative thoughts by replacing them with good thoughts. So I started doing just that.

When a negative thought crept into my brain, I pushed it away. It wasn’t overnight. But now after 3 months I find I am more cheerful and less anxious.”

*Rae*

## GETTING SUPPORT

Think about joining a support group for people with diabetes. Talking to people who understand what you are going through can help. If support groups are not for you, consider talking to a trusted friend. You may find that just talking about the pressure you are under can help you start working toward a solution.

## GET MOVING!

Many people report that getting active helps them manage stress. In addition to helping you feel better, being active can help you focus on something other than the problem that is causing you stress. See page 35 to learn how to get started.

## RELAX WITH MUSIC

Turn on some music you love. Good music has a way of calming people and lifting their spirits. If you have young children, ask a family member or friend to keep an eye on them for 15 minutes. Go into your bedroom, take off your shoes, and lie down with your legs uncrossed. Turn on your favorite music and relax.

## READY TO LOWER STRESS IN YOUR LIFE?

Here are some more ways to lower stress. Check off the ones you will try:

- ☐ I'll try deep breathing.
- ☐ I'll make time for myself, even if it's just 15 minutes a day.
- ☐ I'll come up with a phrase to say and say it to stop negative thoughts.
- ☐ I'll join a support group.
- ☐ I'll talk to my healthcare provider about feeling stressed, anxious, or in a low mood.
- ☐ I'll talk to a friend and work on solutions together.
- ☐ I'll get moving.
- ☐ I'll relax while listening to music.
- ☐ I'll ask for help with chores around the house.

Name other ideas you have to help you lower stress:

Know that it can take time and practice to learn to get a handle on stressors. If one method doesn't work for you, try another.

# QUIT SMOKING

Giving up smoking is another healthy habit—especially for people with diabetes.

## SMOKING IS BAD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

If you smoke, you are more likely to have:

- A leg or foot amputated
- Problems with blood flow in your feet and legs, which may cause pain and lead to amputation
- Trouble getting or keeping an erection, if you are a man

If you smoke, you have a higher risk of:

- Eye damage
- Gum disease, which may cause tooth loss
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Kidney disease
- Nerve damage with numbness and pain

## TIME TO QUIT

Have you thought about quitting, but never set the quit date? Have you tried before, and failed?

Quitting smoking is not easy. Yet many people have succeeded in quitting for good. It's time to join them!

## REASONS TO QUIT

Read why these people with diabetes gave up smoking.

"My brother also has sugar. When he got kidney disease, that's when I finally quit. I don't want to end up on dialysis. I just don't."

*Marvin*

"For years I tried. The thing that made me finally quit for good was when my grandbaby Manny was born. I don't want to die before I see my grandson grown."

*Sue Ellen*

"I was one of those people who kept saying I was going to quit, but I never did. My wife kept asking me to quit, and for our 10th anniversary—I did. I did something good for me, for my family, and for my wallet. Smokes were draining me finance-wise and health-wise."

*Joseph*

Why do you want to quit smoking? Write your top 3 reasons here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## GET READY

Are you ready to quit? Take these steps:

- Talk to your doctor about ways to quit.
- Set a quit date. Write your quit date here:
- Think about joining a smoking cessation class. Write the number to call here:
- Pick a buddy who can support and encourage you. Write your support person's name here:

# CONTROLLING YOUR DIABETES FOR LIFE

## ASK THE DOCTOR

In this column get answers to your questions about diabetes and related illnesses.

**Dear Doctor,**

**I've heard there's no cure for diabetes. Is that right?**

***Sam***

Dear Sam,

People with Type 1 diabetes will need to be on insulin all their life. They will still need to follow good eating and exercise habits.

However, people with Type 2 diabetes may be able to get off insulin or diabetes medicines if they get their blood sugar levels down to normal again. An obese person who gets Type 2 may be able to get completely off their medicines by reaching a healthy weight and being active. Otherwise, people with Type 2 diabetes can reach normal blood sugar levels when their treatment plan is working. When this happens, you will feel good and be healthy.

**Dear Doctor,**

**Sometimes my hands or feet have this tingling feeling. Can this pins and needles feeling be brought on by diabetes?**

***Ceci***

Dear Ceci,

Yes, the “pins and needles” feeling in your hands and feet is called neuropathy. Severe nerve damage can result in loss of feeling. When your feet are numb, you don't notice when you get cuts because you don't feel the pain. These cuts may become infected. This can lead to the removal (amputation) of a foot or leg. Talk to your doctor right away if your hands or feet feel numb.

**Dear Doctor,**

**I'm not real good about going to the dentist as often as I should. Is brushing my teeth twice a day enough?**

***Eddie***

Dear Eddie,

Along with brushing, regular dental care is very important. When your sugar levels are not in control, you run the risk of gum disease and losing your teeth. That is why regular dental checkups are so important. Be gentle when you floss and use a soft-bristle brush to avoid cuts in your mouth.

**Dear Doctor,**

**I noticed I can't do my needlepoint work or even read small print like I used to. Do others with diabetes notice changes in eyesight?**

***Lannie***

Dear Lannie,

Unfortunately, high blood sugar levels can affect your eyesight. People with diabetes are more likely to have trouble seeing. They also have a higher chance of losing their eyesight completely. It is very important to get an exam of your retinas one time a year. Every year.

Your eye doctor will be able to check your eyesight and stop little problems before they become big ones. Make sure to make and keep your appointments with your eye doctor.

**Dear Doctor,**

**I sometimes feel very overwhelmed by having diabetes. It isn't easy going out to eat. It isn't easy having to remember all my medicines. And along with sugar problems I have high blood pressure. Do other people feel like I do, or am I just feeling sorry for myself ?**

***Julio***

Dear Julio,

First off, realize that you are not alone. It is very hard to have a long-lasting health problem. And having more than one chronic condition is difficult. Finding a health provider you trust and forming a good treatment plan is a good first step. Work together to make small changes toward reaching your blood sugar and blood pressure goals.

Some patients find joining a diabetes support group helps them manage this health problem. Call your health plan to find groups near your home.

**Dear Doctor,**

**Every so often, my doctor gives me a urine test. What is he testing for? Is the test important?**

***Ana Maria***

Dear Ana Maria,

The urine test shows you if there is protein in your urine. This test is usually done once a year. It lets you and your doctor know if there are problems with your kidneys. People with diabetes have a greater chance of kidney problems and are at a higher risk of needing dialysis when blood sugar is not controlled. Getting your urine checked is an important part of managing diabetes.



**Dear Doctor,**

**My mother had diabetes. She had terrible problems with her feet. Now I have diabetes too. What's the best way to keep my feet healthy?**

***Suzanne***

Dear Suzanne,

There are lots of things you can do to keep your feet healthy. Try these tips:

- Make sure to dry between your toes so moisture won't cause problems.
- Wear white socks that are loose at the ankles. This makes it easy to see any blood or pus.
- Make sure your shoes are not too tight to prevent blisters.
- Always wear shoes when you are on bare floors or outside to avoid getting cuts.

**Dear Doctor,**

**My doctor always reminds me to do foot checks. Why is this such a big deal, and what should I look for?**

***Rodney***

Dear Rodney,

People with diabetes need to check their feet often for cuts and blisters. Left untreated, even small cuts can get infected. I tell my patients to take these 2 easy steps when doing their foot check each day.

1. Sit in a chair. Look at the tops and bottoms of your feet. Use a hand mirror to help you get a good view. Never stand while doing your foot check because you could fall—or, worse yet, land on the mirror and cut your hand.
2. Check for cuts, cracks, blisters, sores, swelling, redness, and sore toenails. Call your doctor if you have any of these problems.

# TIPS FOR CONTROLLING YOUR DIABETES

The goal of this booklet has been to help you control your diabetes—so that you can be as healthy as possible. These are the most important things to remember.

## WORK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM:

- Get needed tests.
- Ask questions about your health.
- Track your health information.
- Discuss your results and make a treatment plan.

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

- Control your blood sugar.
- Take your medicine.
- Choose healthy habits—eat a healthy diet, stay active, lower stress, quit smoking.

*We wish you much success as you work to control your diabetes. We hope the tips in this booklet will help you on your journey.*

# YOUR DIABETES CARE CHECKLIST

The best way to avoid getting health problems related to diabetes is to keep your blood sugar under control. Use this checklist to help you stop small health problems before they become big ones.

- ✓ Talk to your doctor—get your questions answered. Write your doctor's phone number here:
- ✓ Make sure you know when and how to take your medicines.
- ✓ Learn steps to take if your blood sugar is too high or too low.
- ✓ Find out best times to check your blood sugar levels each day. Set goals with your doctor for levels before meals and 1 to 2 hours after the start of a meal.

## KNOW YOUR A1C

- ☐ Aim to get your A1C below 7%.
- ☐ Check your blood sugar each day—more often if your doctor instructs.

## BLOOD PRESSURE

- ☐ Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure at each visit.
- ☐ Keep track of your levels in a notebook. Keeping your blood pressure under control can lower your chance for heart disease and damage to your blood vessels.

## CHOLESTEROL

- ☐ Have your blood cholesterol checked at least once a year. Keeping your blood cholesterol numbers at the goal you and your doctor set will help protect you from heart damage.

## EYE EXAM

- ☐ Get an eye exam once a year. Ask your eye doctor to send the results to your doctor.
- ☐ Make sure to call your doctor right away if you notice any changes in your vision.

## FEET

- ☐ Remove your shoes and socks at each doctor visit so your doctor can check the feeling and blood flow in your feet.
- ☐ Do a daily foot check. Look for cuts, blisters, or cracks. Check for any swelling or redness. Remember to always wear shoes that fit and feel good. Don't go barefoot.

## KIDNEYS

- ☐ Get your yearly urine test to see how well your kidneys are working. Keeping your blood sugar and blood pressure at normal levels can lower your chance of kidney problems.

## STOP SMOKING

- ☐ If you smoke, talk to your doctor today about help quitting. Smoking can make your blood sugar problems worse.

# NOTES

# CENTENE'S DIABETES MANAGEMENT PHYSICIAN TEAM

***Mary Mason, M.D., MBA,*** is Senior Vice President & Chief Medical Officer for Centene Corporation. Dr. Mason leads the Diabetes Management team for Centene. Prior to coming to Centene, Dr. Mason served as Medical Director and Associate Medical Director for two leading managed care organizations. She has practiced internal medicine since 1999 and is currently a fellow of the American College of Physicians.

***Amy Poole-Yaeger, M.D.,*** is Vice President of Medical Affairs for Centene Corporation. Prior to joining Centene, Dr. Poole-Yaeger served as an Associate Medical Director for a leading managed care organization. She has worked as a pediatric hospitalist since 1997 and is currently a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Contributions were also made by Centene staff Monica Arter, RN, Senior Director of Medical Management, Cathie Krueger, RN, BSN, Director of Quality Improvement, and Cathleen McDaniel, Manager of Operational Processes.

## PLAIN LANGUAGE APPROACH

This booklet was edited by a health literacy expert in plain language style so that people can read this important information, and will want to read it.

The information contained in this diabetes book is for informational purposes only and is in no way meant to be a substitute for professional medical advice, care, diagnosis or treatment. Always consult your physician for diagnosis and for answers to your personal questions. Neither Centene Corporation, its subsidiaries, affiliates, nor any individual involved in the development of this booklet is responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for any form of damages whatsoever resulting from use (or misuse) of information contained or implied by the medical information provided.

© 2010 Centene Corporation. All rights reserved.