

## Diabetes Health Log

This chart will help you keep track of your health numbers. Bring it to your next doctor visit.

Doctor's Exam	Date	My Goal	Date	Finding	Date	Finding
Blood Pressure						
Total Cholesterol						
LDL Cholesterol						
HDL Cholesterol						
Triglycerides						
A1C						
Microalbuminuria						
Dilated Eye Exam						
Complete Foot Exam						

### Hypoglycemia means your blood sugar is too low.

#### Signs:

- Shaky, nervous, anxious
- Heart palpitations (pounding)
- Sweating, feeling warm
- Cold, clammy feeling
- Pupils are dilated (large)
- Feel numb

#### What to do:

- Follow your doctor's action plan for low sugar.
- Drink juice or a non-diet sugary drink.
- Eat sugar. Try candy, sugar cubes or tablets. Always carry some with you.

## Sources

1. <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/>; National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC); National Institutes of Health
2. American Diabetes Association, [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).
3. McGlynn, et al. The Quality of Health Care Delivered to Adults in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*. June 26, 2003 (348: 2635-45).

The information provided in these materials is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Please talk with your doctor about it. Your personal health information is kept private based on your plan's privacy policy. Some services may not be covered under your benefit plan. Please check your benefits.

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## Taking Charge of Your Diabetes





**Take charge of your health. Learn as much as you can.  
It's one of the most important things you can do for yourself.**

## When you're sick — manage your diabetes with care

Colds. Flu. Upset stomach. Everyone gets sick from time to time. But when you have diabetes, you need to take extra care. Or these types of common illnesses can turn dangerous.

Two serious conditions are possible:

- Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)
- Diabetic coma
- DKA is more common with type 1 diabetes. But, it can also happen with type 2.

**While you're sick.**

These steps can help you avoid problems:

- Take your medicine as you always do. Whether pills or insulin — don't skip.
- Keep checking your blood glucose.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Try to eat normally. Or try foods that are easier for you to eat.

Watch for signs of DKA.

Call your doctor if you have these signs:

- Repeated high glucose readings
- Vomiting, nausea, upset stomach, stomach pain
- Dry mouth
- Urinating more than usual
- More thirsty than usual
- Tired more than usual — and it doesn't go away
- Blurry vision
- Fruity smelling breath

Medications			Vaccinations	
Name	Dose	Directions	Date	Date
Influenza (Flu) yearly				
Pneumococcal (pneumonia) ask your doctor				

**Diabetes means your blood glucose is too high.**

Blood glucose is the same thing as blood sugar. Your body does need some.

Glucose, or sugar, gives you energy to keep going. But too much is not healthy.

## Take charge

Welcome to Taking Charge of Your Diabetes. If you or your child has diabetes, you may have questions. What is diabetes? How is it treated? Will I, or my child, always have to take medicine?

You also may wonder about the future. Can diabetes cause other health problems over time? How can they be prevented?

Don't let these questions worry you. We can help you learn about diabetes, and that may help you take charge of your health.

### This guide can help you:

- Understand what diabetes is.
- Learn more about medicines that can help diabetes.
- Work well with your doctor.
- Know how diabetes is different for children.
- Manage your blood sugar, A1C levels, blood pressure and cholesterol, and know why it's important to do so.
- Take good care of your feet and eyes.

**Don't miss the back of this booklet. Tear out the Health Log and use it to keep track of your health information. Be sure to bring it with you to your next doctor visit.**

## Diabetes type 1 and type 2

What is the difference?

Glucose, or sugar, comes from the food you eat.

It's also made in your liver and muscles. Your blood delivers the glucose to your body's cells. This turns into energy.

Insulin is a chemical, or hormone, that your pancreas makes. It's released into your blood. This helps the glucose get into the cells.

But sometimes the body doesn't make any insulin. Or the body might make insulin, but not enough. It could even be that the insulin doesn't work the way it should. Then, the glucose doesn't make it to the cells. It just stays in your blood, and your blood glucose, or sugar levels, get too high.

That's what causes the two most common types of diabetes:

- **Type 1** — there is little or no insulin made by the pancreas. Type 1 is most often seen in young people. But some adults can have it, too.
- **Type 2** — there's not enough insulin. Or, the body can't use insulin the way it should. Type 2 is most often seen in middle-aged or older adults. But young people and children can have it, too. Being overweight is one of the most common risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Your doctor can tell you if your weight puts you at risk for any other health problems.

## Diabetes medicines

If you have diabetes, your doctor may tell you to take one or more medicines. Some can help control your blood sugar. Some can help you avoid other health risks.

It's important to know what each medicine is for and what it does.

**Diabetes medicines and/or insulin.**

Treat diabetes. They help control blood glucose, or sugar. There are many types of diabetes medicines. Many are taken as a pill. Insulin is taken as a shot.

**ACE inhibitor or angiotensin-receptor blocker (ARB).** Relaxes your blood vessels. That makes it easier for the heart to pump. It helps lower blood pressure and can help kidneys stay healthy.

**Statin.** Lowers “bad” cholesterol called LDL. It also raises “good” cholesterol called HDL. Statins work to keep arteries clear and open.

**Antiplatelet.** This is a blood thinner. It helps prevent blood clots, which can help you avoid a heart attack or stroke. Aspirin is one type of blood thinner. Ask your doctor about others.

Has your doctor told you to take one or more of these medicines? If not, ask why. They may help you.



## Your primary doctor

Do you have a primary doctor? This is a doctor you see for all of your health concerns. If you don't have one, you should get one. You can choose a doctor that's in your health plan's network. Need help finding one? Look at the back of your health plan member ID card and call the Customer Service number.

A primary doctor can help you control your diabetes. But, you need to work as a team. Tell your doctor about how you're feeling. Listen carefully, and ask questions.

The more you work together, the better your doctor will be able to treat your diabetes.

### What kind of doctor should I see?

- Primary care doctor. You see this doctor for all types of health concerns. He or she often manages diabetes, too.
- Diabetes doctor (endocrinologist). This is a specialist. You may be referred to this type of doctor, if needed. That will depend on how your diabetes is doing.
- Other specialists — heart, kidney, eye, vascular. Has your diabetes caused other health concerns? If so, these doctors can help.

**Be sure to check your benefit plan for specific coverage details.**

## Working well with your doctor

Consider these tips to make the most of your doctor visit. Together, you can help manage your diabetes.

1 Bring a list of everything you take:

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Supplements or herbs
- Vitamins

2 Bring your Diabetes Health Log. Talk about any changes that might be needed. Make sure your treatment plan is right for you.

3 Bring a list of all your questions for the doctor. Bring a pen and paper to write down important things your doctor tells you.

4 Be sure your doctor:

- Helps you take steps to stay healthy
- Has a plan to treat your diabetes
- Makes time for your questions
- Listens to you

## Control your diabetes

Avoid problems or slow them down.

Diabetes can cause serious health problems:

- Blindness
- Kidney failure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Circulation and nerve damage, especially in the feet and legs

Consider these tips! They may help you control your diabetes. That means you can avoid some health problems. Or, you can keep problems from getting worse.

[Monitor your blood sugar.](#)

Do it just the way your doctor tells you to. Don't skip it — your health depends on it.

[Take your medicine.](#)

Each one is important. Some control your blood sugar. Some help you get healthy or avoid risks. Follow your doctor's orders.

[Eat smart — all day, every day.](#)

- You need a meal plan that's right for you. Talk with your doctor. Or, talk with a dietitian. He or she can help.
- Eat at the same times every day and try to eat about the same amount of food each day.
- Find out how many calories you need each day. Your doctor can tell you.
- Learn about serving sizes. Ask your doctor how much of each food is right. Ask about starches, fruits, vegetables, protein (meats and nuts), milk products and fats.

[Stay at a healthy weight. Or, lose extra pounds, if needed.](#)

An ideal weight is different for everyone. Your doctor can guide you. Your weight affects your diabetes. That's why it's so important. Extra weight can lead to complications. A healthy weight can help you avoid problems.

[Keep moving. Get some exercise every day.](#)

- Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Check your blood sugar when you exercise. Ask your doctor when and how often.
- Walk, dance, ride a bike, play with the kids. Have fun doing something you like.





## Kids' Corner

In some ways, diabetes can be the same for children as it is for adults. But there's one big difference. Children are always growing and changing, so their diabetes care must change with them. These tips can help:

1. **Teach your child these basics: Eat right, stay active, test your blood sugar and never forget your medicine.**
  - Get into a regular routine. Set a time for each of these basics.
  - Talk with your child about the foods he or she likes. Also, talk about the type of activity he or she likes.
  - Remember, your child's likes and dislikes will change. Be flexible.
  - Set a good example for your child. Eat well and exercise. Get enough sleep.

2. **Be sure to work with your child's school. Make a diabetes "school plan" together. This will tell the school nurse, teacher, and coaches what to do in an emergency. The plan should also tell the school about:**

- Food — the meals and snacks your child can eat and when.
- Blood sugar testing — when it should be done.
- Medicine — what it is. Also, how and when to give it.
- Signs to watch for — such as high or low blood sugar. And, the action they should take.
- Phone numbers — so they can reach you and your doctor.
- Set a good example for your child. Eat well and exercise. Get enough sleep.

3. **Be aware of your child's feelings.**

Children can feel embarrassed, frustrated or sad about having diabetes. They may feel different from the other kids. Talk with your child. Listen to his or her worries. Knowing that you're there and you understand can make a difference. Is your child having a hard time? Does he or she seem angry or depressed? Sometimes, extra help may be needed. Talk to your doctor or a school counselor.

4. **Help your child meet other children who have diabetes.**

It can be easier to share feelings with other kids. Check out support groups or programs for kids with diabetes. Your doctor might be able to help.

## Diabetes and your feet

Read this to help protect your feet.

Diabetes can cause serious foot problems, too. Sores or cuts need to be taken care of right away. If not, they can lead to bad infections. What's worse is this can then lead to amputation — when a foot or leg has to be removed.

### Neuropathy or nerve damage.

Numbness — that makes it harder to feel pain. So, if you have an injury on your foot or leg, you might not know it right away.

### Peripheral arterial disease, or PAD.

Blood doesn't flow to legs and feet the way it should. That makes it hard for them to heal if you have an injury.

### What can you do to protect your feet?

Consider these tips to help protect your feet:

- Check your feet every day. Look for cuts or other problems.
- Treat cuts right away. Wash with soap and water. Cover small cuts with bandages.
- Don't go barefoot. Wear shoes that fit right.
- Let your doctor know about any cuts or other injuries.
- Watch blisters, ingrown toenails or calluses carefully. They can lead to infection and wounds that won't heal.
- Be sure your doctor does a complete foot exam at least once a year.

### What to watch for.

These are signs that you might have neuropathy or PAD:

- Numbness or tingling
- Pain in feet or legs
- Cuts or injuries that don't heal
- Cold, pale skin
- Swelling or discoloration
- Dried or cracked skin

## Diabetes and your eyes

Read this to help keep your eyes healthy.

Need a good reason to control your blood sugar? It may save your vision.

Over time, high blood sugar makes blood vessels weak. They can even burst. That can lead to retinopathy. This is a condition that can cause blindness.

### What can you do to help save your vision?

These tips can help keep your eyes healthy:

- Keep your blood sugar under control. Stay as close to normal as you can.
- Watch your blood pressure. Be sure that's as close to normal as possible, too.
- Visit an eye doctor once a year. Find out if you need to see him or her more often.
- Ask about when you should have a test with dilated pupils.
- Call your doctor if you have any eye problems.

### What to watch for.

See your eye doctor right away if you notice:

- Blurry vision
- Dark or floating spots
- Double vision
- Any vision loss, even a little bit
- Pressure or pain in one or both eyes
- Redness of the eyes all the time

**An eye test can find problems even before you notice them.** So, visit an eye doctor yearly even if you think your eyes are fine.



## Stay healthy with the ABCs of diabetes

Diabetes can cause many serious health risks. So, put the ABCs of diabetes to work for you. These guidelines are from the American Diabetes Association. They are for adults. For children's guidelines, check with your doctor.

### A1C level test

**What it is:** This lab test shows how well your blood sugar has been controlled over the past two to three months. It's not the same as checking your blood sugar at home.

#### What you need to know:

The goal for most people is lower than 7 percent.

**How often:** Have an A1C test two to four times a year. Ask your doctor what's best for you.

### Blood pressure check

**Why you need it:** High blood pressure puts you at risk for stroke and heart attack. Tracking your blood pressure can help you lower those risks.

#### What you need to know:

The goal for most people with diabetes is less than 130/80 mmHG.

**How often:** Blood pressure checks should be done at every doctor visit. Your doctor may ask you to check it at home, too.

### Cholesterol tests

**The bad and the good:** LDL is the "bad" cholesterol. It can clog the arteries. That can lead to a heart attack. HDL is the "good" cholesterol. It removes cholesterol from the arteries.

#### What you need to know:

The common goal for LDL is lower than 100 mg/dL. The common goal for HDL is higher than 60 mg/dL to protect your heart.

**How often:** Have a cholesterol test at least once a year. If it's too high, you may need it more often. Ask your doctor what's right for you.