



# Basic Diabetes Care

Staying Healthy With Diabetes

**PASSPORT**  
HEALTH★PLAN 



This booklet is designed to give you basic information about diabetes. It is not meant to take the place of meeting with your health care provider on a regular basis or any diabetes education classes.

Ask your local health care provider or your local health department about diabetes education classes and about making an appointment with a dietitian.

Recommendations are based on 2008 Clinical Practice Recommendations from the American Diabetes Association.

This booklet was modified by Passport Health Plan with permission from the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

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# Basic Diabetes Care

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# What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a medical condition that keeps your body from processing food normally.

## **Type 1 diabetes:**

Your body can no longer make insulin.

## **Type 2 diabetes:**

Your body may still make insulin, but it does not work effectively.

**With Type 1 and 2,** sugar builds up in the blood and causes diabetes.

## 4 things you can do to stay healthy with diabetes:



**1. Monitor your blood sugar.**

**2. Take your medicine, if prescribed.**

**3. Eat healthy.**

**4. Exercise regularly.**

## **You Are Not Alone...**

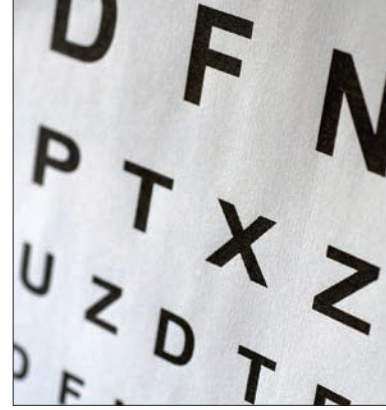
Having diabetes can be overwhelming and scary. The good news is, there is support. Ask your health care provider about classes, support groups and other services they offer for people with diabetes.

# Why Should I Control My Blood Sugar?

Taking Control of Yourself Makes a Difference!

High blood sugar can lead to problems such as:

- Heart disease
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Circulation problems
- Eye disease
- Kidney disease



To help prevent these problems, you can:

<i>Every day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow your diabetes meal plan</li> <li>• Find positive ways to cope with stress</li> <li>• Check your blood sugar</li> <li>• Check your feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Brush and floss your teeth</li> <li>• Take your medicine as prescribed</li> </ul>
<i>At least every 6 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an A1c test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See your dentist</li> </ul>
<i>At least every year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your cholesterol and blood fat checked</li> <li>• Have a dilated eye exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a kidney exam</li> <li>• Have a flu shot</li> <li>• Have a foot exam to check for nerve damage</li> </ul>
<i>At every office visit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your feet checked</li> <li>• Have your blood pressure and weight checked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your blood sugar checked</li> <li>• Take your blood sugar logbook and talk with your provider</li> </ul>

## Other things to do

- Ask if you need a pneumonia shot
- Ask about a sick day plan
- If you smoke, ask about a program to help you quit



If you are overweight, losing 10 lbs. can make a **big difference** in controlling your blood sugar.

# Hyperglycemia

“High Blood Sugar” — when your blood sugar level is higher than the goal you set with your provider

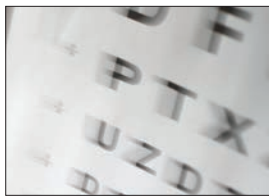
**Causes:** Too much food, too little insulin or diabetes medication, illness, stress, less exercise than normal.

**Onset:** Often starts slowly and may lead to a medical emergency if not treated.

## Symptoms



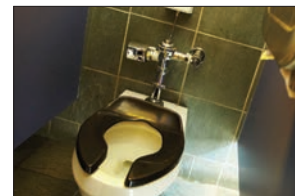
Always thirsty



Blurred vision



Hunger



Frequent urination



Dry skin



Sleepiness



A sore that won't heal



## Treatment

### What can you do?

- Check blood glucose.
- If your blood glucose levels are higher than your goal for 3 days and you do not know why, you should ...  
***Call your provider!***
- Check Ketones with Ketone strips if your sugar is above 300 mg/dl. Ketones form when the body starts to use its own fat instead of sugar for energy. They are a poison to your body. If you have Ketones, call your provider right away.

# Hypoglycemia

“Low Blood Sugar” — when your blood sugar level is too low—70 or below

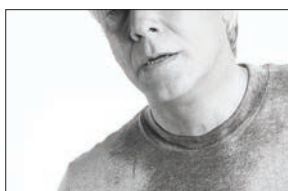
**Causes:** Too little food or skipping a meal, too much insulin or diabetes medication, increase in activity.

**Onset:** Often sudden; may pass out if not treated.

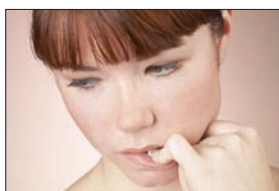
## Symptoms



Fast heartbeat



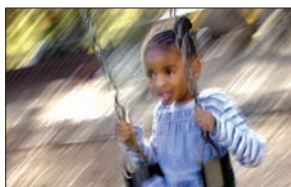
Sweating



Nervousness



Hunger



Blurred vision



Headache



Irritable

**Symptoms may also include:**

shaking, weakness, and dizziness.

## Treatment

### What can you do?

- Check your blood glucose right away. If you cannot check it, treat anyway.
- Treat by eating 3 to 4 glucose tablets or 2 to 5 hard candies that you can chew quickly (such as peppermints), or by drinking 4 ounces of fruit juice or 1/2 can of regular soda pop.
- Check your blood glucose again after 15 minutes. If it is still low, treat again. If symptoms don't stop, call your health care provider.
- Within 15 minutes after symptoms go away, eat a light snack. *Light Snack*— half a peanut butter sandwich and half a glass of milk.
- Always wear your diabetes identification.



# Monitoring Your Blood Sugar

- Follow the instructions that come with your blood sugar meter.
- Store your strips in the original package and at room temperature.
- Do not use expired strips.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before checking your blood sugar.
- Be sure you have enough blood on your test strip.
- Dispose of your lancets properly. Check with your provider, diabetes educator, and/or trash company about the proper disposal of these items.
- Record your blood sugar in your logbook. Bring your logbook to each medical visit.
- Follow guidelines for highs and lows on pages 4 and 5.



## How often should I check my blood sugar?

Many people check their blood sugar several times throughout the day. Ask your health care provider how often they would like you to check it.

## What times should I check my blood sugar?

Before and two hours after meals, before and after exercise, and anytime you feel different than usual are good times to check your blood sugar. Ask your health care provider what times are best for you.

## What should my numbers be?

Fasting Blood Sugar

70-130 mg/dl

Blood Sugar  
1-2 hours  
after eating

less than 180 mg/dl

## TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS

- Use a blood glucose meter to learn what your blood glucose is at any time.
- Get a blood glucose test done by your provider — called an A1c — at least twice a year.



# Exercise

Regular exercise is a key part of your diabetes treatment plan. Exercise helps keep blood sugars in a healthy range. Exercise may also:

- Lower stress and increase energy.
- Increase strength and range of motion.
- Help control blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Make insulin work better.

Choose an exercise plan you can enjoy. If you have not exercised in a while, start slowly. For example, adding a 5-minute walk to your day may be a good start. Work up to at least 30 minutes a day.

Ask your pharmacist or your provider about where to get an I.D. bracelet or necklace.



## Things to carry with you when exercising:

1. Phone numbers of family and providers in case of an emergency
2. Cell phone or change to make a phone call
3. Blood sugar monitor
4. Diabetes I.D.
5. Emergency food to treat low blood sugar such as glucose tablets, hard candies, regular soft drinks, or a tablespoon of sugar

## Exercise Safely

- **See your provider before beginning any exercise program.**
- Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids like water.
- Check your blood sugar before and after exercise.
- Wear good-fitting shoes and check your feet before and after exercise.
- Include a warm-up and cool-down with each workout.
- Avoid an intense workout outdoors if it is very hot, humid, smoggy or cold.



# Medicine Tips



- Know the name of your pill and the amount you take.
- Know when to take your pill.
- Make a list of your medicines and carry it with you.
- Call your provider about any side effects you may have.
- Never stop taking medicine or change dosage without asking your provider.
- Ask your pharmacist questions about your medicine.

## Insulin

If you have Type 1 diabetes, you must take insulin to live. With Type 2 diabetes, you may take pills or insulin or both. Your health care provider should teach you how to take insulin, but remember the following:

- Check the expiration date on the insulin bottle or pen.
- Look at the insulin to make sure there are no solids or frosting in the bottle.
- Never freeze insulin or keep it in places above 80 degrees such as the car or in sunlight.
- Gently roll bottle between palms to warm up cold insulin before injecting.
- Ask your pharmacist or health care provider if the insulin should be mixed.
- Measure insulin carefully for the correct amount.
- Dispose of needles appropriately. Check with your provider, diabetes educator, and/or trash company about proper disposal of these items.



# My Pyramid Plan

## What does a serving look like?

3 ounces of meat is about the size and thickness of a deck of playing cards

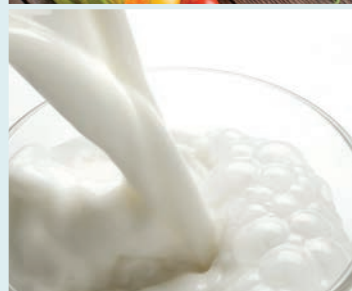
1 ounce of cheese is about the size of 4 stacked dice

1/2 cup of ice cream is about the size of a tennis ball

1 cup of veggies is about the size of your fist

1 teaspoon of butter or peanut butter is about the size of the tip of your thumb

1 ounce of nuts or small candies equals one handful



**Focus on fruits.** Eat a variety of fruits rather than fruit juice.

**Vary your veggies.** Eat more dark-colored veggies. Eat small servings of starchy veggies such as beans, peas and sweet potatoes.

**Get your calcium-rich foods.** Get 3 servings of low-fat or fat-free milk or low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese every day. If you don't or can't drink milk, choose lactose-free dairy products.

**Make half your grains whole.** Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. Even whole grains have carbohydrates, so still watch the portion size.

**Go lean with protein.** Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds.

**Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars.** Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (calorie sweeteners).

# Rate Your Plate

One easy way to shape up your diet and make sure it includes a variety of healthy foods is to **“Rate Your Plate.”** This is what you do:

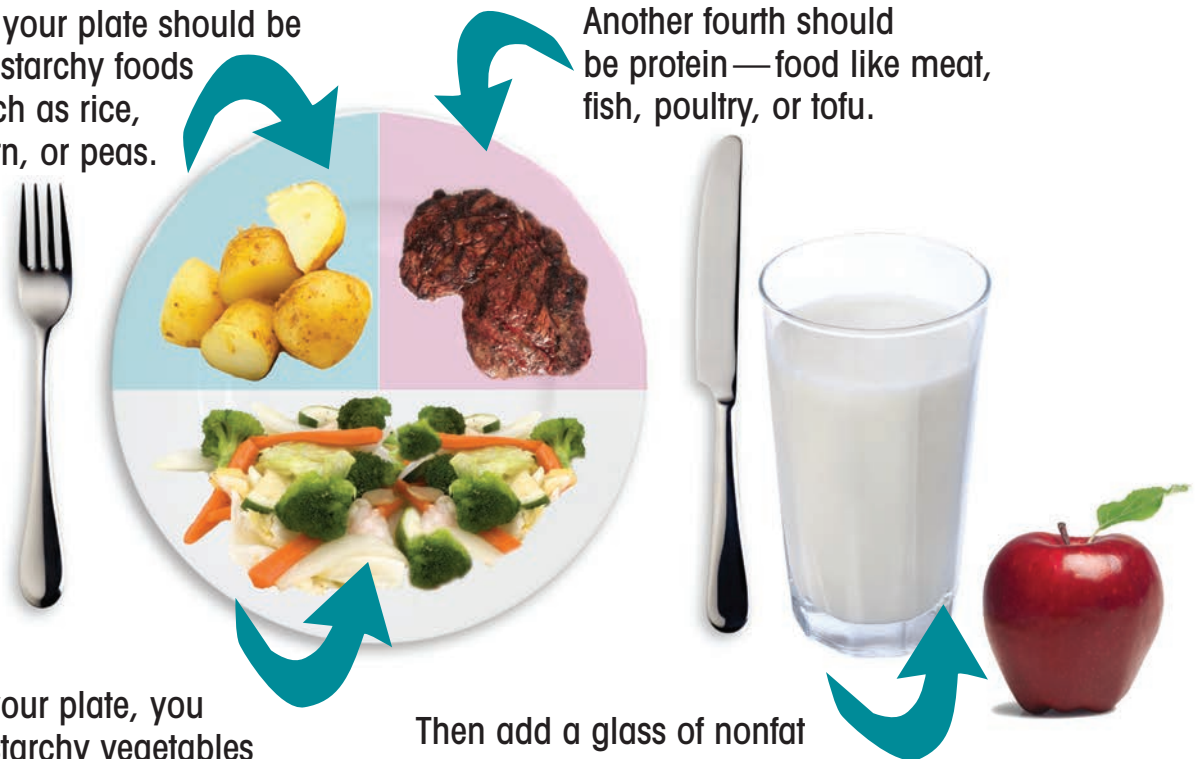
- Get a 9-inch paper plate and draw a line through the middle of the plate. Then draw a line to divide one of the halves into quarters.

## 1/4 Carbohydrates

About one-fourth of your plate should be filled with grains or starchy foods (carbohydrates) such as rice, pasta, potatoes, corn, or peas.

## 1/4 Protein

Another fourth should be protein—food like meat, fish, poultry, or tofu.



## 1/2 Vegetables

For the last half of your plate, you can fill it with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes, or cauliflower.

Then add a glass of nonfat milk and a small roll or piece of fruit, and you are ready to eat!

## Healthier Options:

- Bake, broil or steam your foods rather than frying. If frying, use a spray like PAM or oil instead of butter or margarine.
- Add a glass of nonfat milk or a cup of low-fat, artificially sweetened yogurt. If you wish, you can also add a small serving of fruit (a small apple, orange or peach, a small handful of dried fruit like raisins, or frozen fruit).

# Diabetes Food Pyramid

A healthy meal plan includes foods from all major food groups.

## Fats, Oils & Sweets *(use sparingly)*

- 1 tsp butter, margarine or oil
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise

## Milk & Yogurt *(2-3 servings)*

- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup yogurt

## Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans & Eggs *(4-6 ounces)*

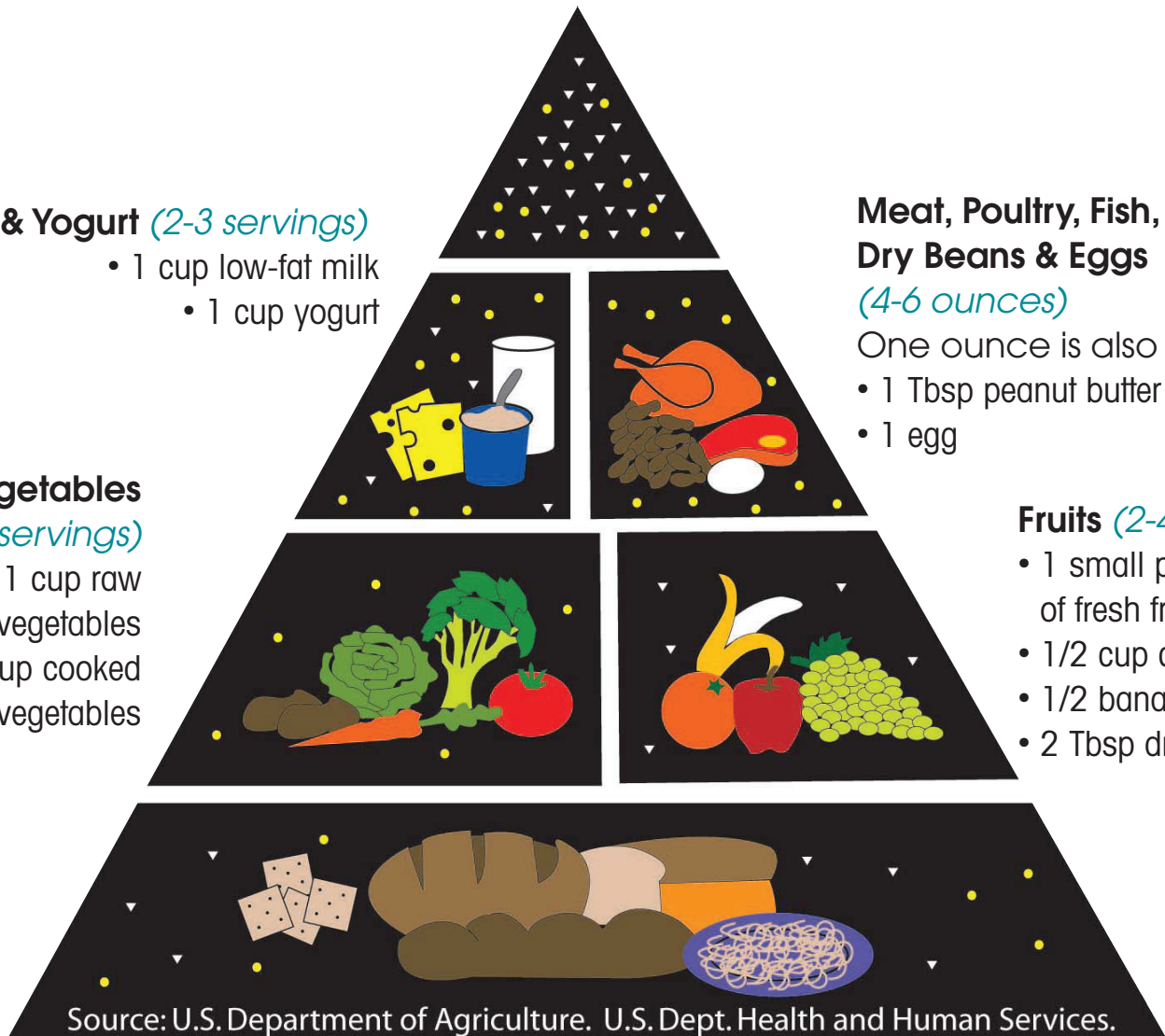
- One ounce is also
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
  - 1 egg

## Vegetables *(3-5 servings)*

- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables

## Fruits *(2-4 servings)*

- 1 small piece of fresh fruit
- 1/2 cup canned fruit
- 1/2 banana
- 2 Tbsp dried fruit



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. Dept. Health and Human Services.

## Bread, Cereal, Starchy Vegetables, Rice & Pasta *(6-11 servings)*

- 1 slice of bread
- 4-6 crackers
- 1/2 bun
- 1/3 cup rice or pasta
- 1/2 cup starchy vegetable

# Reading Labels

Learning to read labels is a key to healthy eating. Below are four of the most important parts of a food label:

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (228mg)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
<b>Calories 260</b>		<b>Calories from Fat 120</b>	
% Daily Value			
<b>Total Fat</b> 13g		20%	
Saturated Fat 5g		25%	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg		10%	
<b>Sodium</b> 660mg		28%	
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 31g		10%	
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%	
<b>Sugars</b> 5g			
<b>Protein</b> 5g			
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat. fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300g	300g
Sodium	Less than	2,400g	2,400g
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

**Serving Size:** Use measuring spoons or cups to see what it looks like. All the nutrition information listed is for one serving. If you eat two servings, multiply everything by two.

**Calories:** This is key for weight loss.

**Total Fat:** A low-fat food is less than 3 grams of fat. Try to choose mostly low-fat foods.

**Total Carbohydrates:** Some carbohydrate is needed every day, but too much may make blood sugar too high. Total carbohydrates includes grams of sugar. Watching total carbohydrates is more important than watching grams of sugar. If something is sugar-free, it does not mean it is carbohydrate-free. It is also good to look for foods high in dietary fiber. Your dietitian can tell you how many grams of carbohydrate you need.

# Nutrition

Eating right with diabetes does not mean you have to give up your favorite foods. Learning how to eat healthy is a key part of good diabetes care. For good diabetes meal planning, you should:



- Eat your meals on time as planned.
- Choose baked, broiled or grilled foods instead of fried meats or vegetables.
- Limit adding extra fats like margarine or butter to vegetables, breads and meat.
- Use low-fat milk, cheese and dressings.
- Fresh fruit is a better choice than fruit juice.
- Choose and buy healthy foods and low-fat snacks (*such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheese and crackers, light popcorn, yogurt, pretzels*).
- Learn how different foods affect your blood sugar.
- Set up an appointment with a dietitian to discuss your meal plan.



Remember, **carbohydrates** are starches and sugars in food. They have more effect on your blood sugar. Foods like bread, pasta, potatoes, and sweets are examples of foods high in carbohydrates. You can eat these foods, but you need to make sure that you do not eat too much of them. Your blood sugar may get too high when you eat more **carbohydrates** than your body needs.

# Sick Days



When you are sick, it can make your blood sugar go higher than usual. You must have a plan for your sick days **before** you get sick. Talk to your provider about a plan for sick days.

## Call your provider if you:

- Have 2 blood sugars in a row over 300 mg/dl or several low blood sugars in a row.
- Have vomiting or diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- Cannot eat solid foods for more than 24 hours.
- Cannot keep liquids down.
- Do not feel better after 2 days.
- Feel dizzy, confused, or in pain.

## Sick Day Tips

- **Never** stop taking your diabetes pills or insulin without talking to your provider.
- Check your blood sugar at least every 4 hours when you are sick.
- Drink water to prevent dehydration.
- If you cannot eat solid foods, eat or drink unsweetened fruit juice, clear broth, tea, JELL-O, dry toast, or crackers.

## Sick Day Foods

Try your best to eat regular meals. If you can't, here are some examples of foods to keep your carbohydrate intake about the same:

- 1/2 cup pudding
- 1/2 cup regular gelatin
- 4-6 crackers
- 1/2 cup juice

# ABC's of Diabetes

## A

**A1c** – shows your blood sugar average over the last 3 to 4 months

- Should be done at least twice each year or as directed by your provider
- For good control, keep your A1c less than 7

## Aspirin

- Ask your provider about taking aspirin

## B

## Blood Pressure

- Have your BP (blood pressure) checked each time you visit your provider
- Keep your BP 130/80 or less

## C

## Cholesterol

- Keep your BAD cholesterol (LDL) less than 100
- Keep your GOOD cholesterol (HDL) greater than 40

## D

## Diet

- Follow your diabetes food plan
- Watch portion sizes
- Make healthy food choices
- Choose sugar-free, low-fat and low-salt foods
- Check with your provider before starting any diet

## Dental

- Visit your dentist twice a year

## E

## Eye Care

- Have a **DRE** (Dilated Retinal Exam) each year
- Even if your vision is normal, you could still have damage

## Exercise

- One of the best ways to manage your diabetes
- Check with your provider about an exercise program

## F

## Foot Care

- Have your provider check your feet at each visit
- Check your feet daily for redness, cuts, sores or blisters
- Have a yearly monofilament test to check for nerve damage
- **Always** wear shoes, never go bare-footed

## Flu

- Have a flu shot each year
- Ask your provider if you need a pneumonia shot

## K

## Kidneys

- Have a yearly microalbumin test to check for damage

## S

## Smoking

- Increases your risk of having diabetes complications
- Consider quitting and/or joining a smoking cessation program or class

## Poorly Controlled Diabetes Can Cause:

**A** – Amputation

**B** – Blindness

**C** – Coronary (heart) disease / heart attacks and strokes

**D** – Dialysis



# Resources

- **Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program**  
[www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/diabetes](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/diabetes) | 1-502-564-7996
- **American Diabetes Association**  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) | 1-800-DIABETES
- **National Diabetes Education Program**  
[www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov) | 1-301-496-3583
- **American Dietetic Association**  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) | 1-800-877-1600
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**  
[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov) | 1-301-496-4000
- **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**  
[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov) | 1-800-860-8747
- **Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation**  
[www.kyllionseye.org](http://www.kyllionseye.org) | 1-800-232-5308
- **Partnership for Prescription Assistance in KY**  
[www.pparxky.org](http://www.pparxky.org) | 1-888-477-2669
- **Louisville Metro Public Health & Wellness**  
[www.louisvilleky.gov/health](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/health) | 1-502-574-6663
- **Lincoln Trail District Health Department**  
[www.ltdhd.ky.gov](http://www.ltdhd.ky.gov) | 1-800-280-1601
- **American Heart Association**  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) | 1-800-AHA-USA-1

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