

Learning how to manage your diabetes is the key to feeling better and staying healthy. Managing your diabetes means keeping your blood sugar close to normal. Since there is no cure for diabetes, you will need to do this for the rest of your life.

But, if you learn how to keep your blood sugar in the normal range, you can live a good life! Just remember that you are not alone. You have a team of providers who will help you with your goals. They will work with you to help you reach your goals, but it will be up to you to take action! You are in control!

Your Team - people who will help you learn how to take care of yourself.

Your team may include:

- **Provider or Nurse Practitioner** – this person will lead the team and may be your family physician or a specialist who treats your diabetes only (endocrinologist).
- **Diabetes Educator** – this person usually works one-on-one with you. They will teach you about diabetes, how it affects you, meters and supplies for testing your blood sugar, how to take your medicine, signs of high and low blood sugar levels and how to treat it, and how to avoid complications.

- **Dietician** - this person will help you with meal planning, reading food labels, making healthy choices when eating out, and grocery shopping.
- **Pharmacist** – this person will help answer questions about your medicines, what side effects to watch for, how to store it, what over-the-counter medicines are best for you.
- **Podiatrist** – a provider who helps take care of foot problems. He or she will teach you how to take care of your feet, and how to do a foot exam at home. The podiatrist will check your feet for any problems related to corns, calluses or bunions. He or she may prescribe special shoes or inserts for you.
- **Family and Friends** – if you attend classes, it is best if you have a family member or friend attend the classes with you. Your family members and friends should know that you are diabetic and how to respond in an emergency situation. They can also offer you support and encourage you to control your diabetes.
- **Ophthalmologist** – a provider who helps take care of your eyes. You should see this provider once a year for a Dilated Retinal Exam (DRE). Even if your vision seems okay, you still need to have your eyes tested every year. High blood sugar and high blood pressure can damage your eyes. You may not have vision loss at first. This is

What you can do to reach your goals:

Meal Planning	Plan meals so you can reach a healthy weight and stay there.
Exercise	Physical activity can make you feel better and give you more energy.
Medicine	Take your medicines how your provider tells you to take them.
Blood Sugar Testing	Test your blood sugar everyday, as often as your provider tells you to. Remember, no one can tell what their blood sugar is by how they feel. The only way to know for sure is by testing your blood sugar.
Take Classes	Ask your provider questions about diabetes or nutrition education classes that may be offered free at the health department. Some of these services may need a referral or prior authorization. Check with your provider before making an appointment.
Set Goals	Set goals you think you can reach. Work on areas that will benefit you the most, such as meal planning, getting more exercise, or losing weight.

why you must have your eyes checked even if your vision seems okay.

- **Dentist** – a provider who helps take care of your teeth. He or she will check for signs of tooth decay or gum disease. People with diabetes can get these problems if their blood sugar stays high. You could even lose your teeth. If you smoke, you are more likely to get a bad case of gum disease. Brush and floss your teeth each day. Let your dentist know you have diabetes. You should see your dentist every 6 months. If you have dentures, you should see your dentist once a year.

How often you see your team members will depend on how well you control your diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends you see your provider 2 to 4 visits a year or every 3 to 6 months.

Exams you need once a year:

- Cholesterol
- LDL
- HDL
- Triglycerides
- Microalbumin (urine kidney test)
- Creatinine (blood test to check kidney function)
- DRE (dilated retinal exam)
- Monofilament (foot exam)
- Flu shot

Exams and testing you need at each provider visit:

- Visual foot exam
- Weight check
- Blood pressure check
- Blood sugar check
- Review of your blood sugar record

Test you need every 3 to 6 months:

- Hemoglobin A1c

Other things to do:

- Pneumonia shot - ask your provider if you are due for one.
- If you smoke, talk to your team about programs that can help you quit.
- Ask your provider about a sick day plan. This is so you will know what to do when you are sick.
- Ask your provider about skin care. They can tell you what type of lotions to use and which ones not to use.

Being a diabetic does not have to keep you from living a healthy life. It has been proven that diabetics who control their blood sugar levels will have a lower risk of eye disease, kidney disease, heart disease, and nerve damage. You can take control!

