

# DIABETES POCKET GUIDE

Common Words People with Diabetes Need to Know

Understanding your diabetes is very important. Sometimes your provider will use words you do not know. You may know these words are about your diabetes, but you are not sure what they mean. When this happens, let your provider know. We know that sometimes people are afraid to ask a provider to repeat information or to say, “I don’t understand.” That is why we are giving you this Diabetes Pocket Guide.

This Pocket Guide can help you understand the words about diabetes. Keep this Pocket Guide with you at all times. If you are still not sure what a word means, you may ask your provider or contact a diabetes manager at 1-800-578-0603, press 0, then press 77074 or 78259. Our diabetes managers are here to answer your questions.

**Ace-Inhibitors (ACE) or Angiotensin II Receptor Blocker (ARB):** drugs used to lower blood pressure and delay the start of kidney disease in diabetics.

**Albumin:** a type of protein found in urine. This may be a sign of kidney disease. That is why diabetics need a micro-albumin test for protein in the urine.

**Anti-Diabetic Agent:** medicine used to control the amount of sugar in the blood. This medicine may be taken as an insulin shot or a pill by mouth.

**Blood Glucose Meter:** a machine that tells how much sugar is in the blood.

**Blood Pressure:** the force of blood against the walls of the blood vessels. High blood pressure that is not controlled can lead to long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease.

**Carbohydrates:** starches, sugar, and fiber that our bodies need for energy. Your provider may have you count the number of carbohydrates you eat at each meal. Doing this can help you control your blood sugar levels.

There are 2 types of carbohydrates: (1) simple and (2) complex.

**Simple carbohydrates:** give you quick energy but do not give any nutrients. Examples: soft drinks, cookies, candy, donuts, cakes

**Complex carbohydrates:** are the best choice and give you energy, nutrients, and fiber. Examples: strawberries, apples, oranges, fresh vegetables, whole wheat pasta, whole grain cereals, oatmeal, beans, lentils, and brown rice.

**Cholesterol (lipids):** are “fats” found in the blood and cells. Foods high in cholesterol come from animals such as egg yolks, meat, milk, and dairy products. Foods with little or no cholesterol come from plants such as fruits, vegetables, grains

and nuts. Your cholesterol should be tested at least once a year. (Also see HDL, LDL, and Triglycerides)

**Chronic:** something you have for a long time that does not go away. Diabetes is a chronic disease.

**Diabetes Type I:** happens when the body makes little or no insulin. With Type I diabetes you have to take medicine to get insulin into your body. Without enough insulin your body does not get the energy it needs and sugar builds up in the blood. (See Hemoglobin A1c)

**Diabetes Type II:** happens when the body makes enough insulin, but does not respond well to the insulin. (See Hemoglobin A1c)

**Diabetic Nephropathy (kidney damage):** a disease of the kidneys caused by damage to the small blood vessels. This is caused by on-going high blood pressure and high blood sugar. You should be tested yearly for kidney disease. These tests include a creatinine, micro-albumin, or GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate) test.

**Diabetic Neuropathy (nerve damage):** this is caused by on-going high blood sugar levels. Over time the high blood sugar levels cause damage to the nerves in the feet. This lowers a person’s ability to feel pain and pressure in their feet. (See Monofilament Test)

**Diabetic Retinopathy:** a disease of the small blood vessels in the retina of the eye. This is caused by on-going high blood pressure and high blood sugar. A DRE (Dilated Retinal Exam) can find diabetic retinopathy. You should get a DRE test every year.

**Dilated Retinal Exam (DRE):** this test is done by inserting drops in the eyes to dilate the blood vessels. Your eye care provider can then tell if there is any damage to the retina. If the damage is found early, it can be treated. If the damage is not treated, it can cause blindness.

**Glucose:** another word for sugar.

**HDL:** sometimes called the “good cholesterol” because it can help prevent a heart attack. HDL is found in foods such as fish, olive oil, canola oil, and nuts.

**Hemoglobin A1c or HbA1c:** a test that measures a person’s average blood sugar over 3 to 4 months. You should get this test every 3 to 6 months.

**Hyperglycemia:** means there is a high level of glucose or sugar in the blood.

**Hypoglycemia:** means there is a low level of glucose or sugar in the blood

**Insulin:** a hormone made by the body that moves sugar from the blood into the cells. If your body does not make enough insulin, the sugar builds up in the blood.

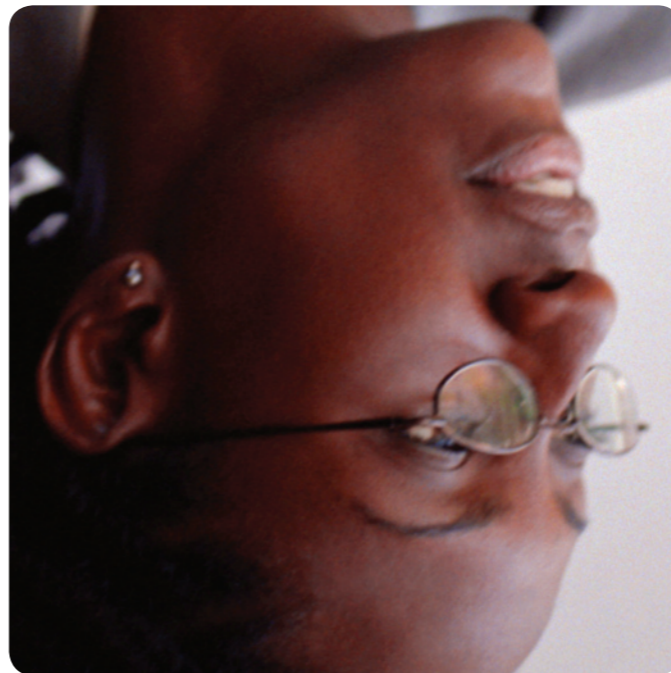
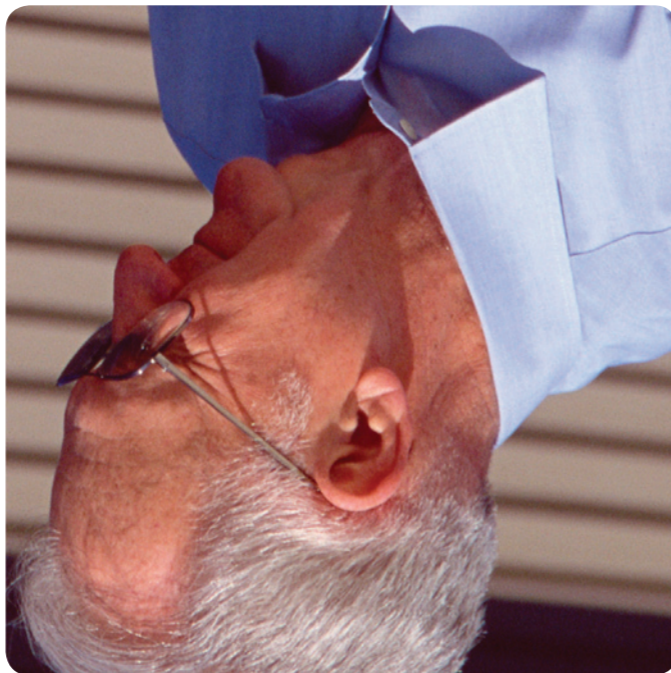
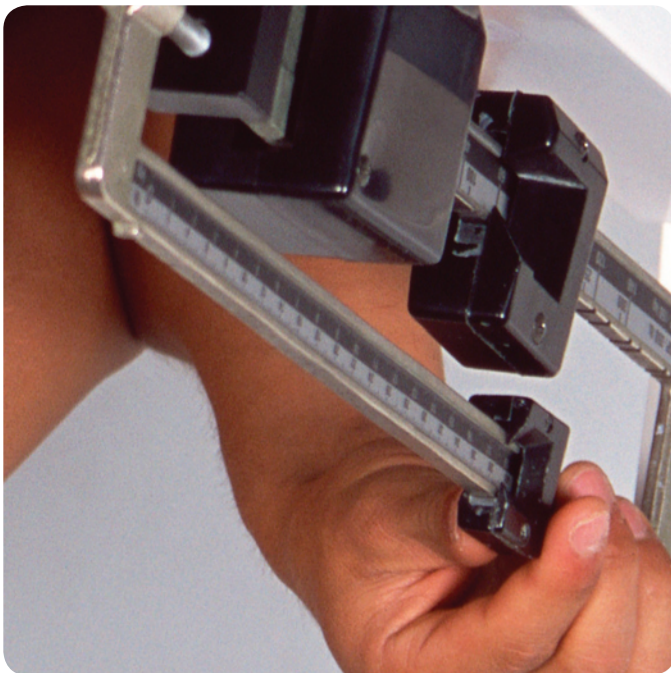
**LDL:** sometimes called the “bad cholesterol.” If LDL builds up in the blood vessels it can cause plaque in the walls of the vessels. This may cause you to have a heart attack or stroke. LDL is found in foods with trans fats and saturated fats such as margarine, vegetable shortening, butter, red meat, and deep fried foods.

**Monofilament Test:** a simple test used to see if there is loss of feeling in your feet. The test uses a thin, flexible, plastic string to see if you can feel light touch or pressure in certain areas on the bottom of your feet.

**Pancreas:** a gland in your body that makes insulin.

**Podiatrist:** a doctor or provider who treats and takes care of your feet.

**Triglycerides:** the most common type of fat in your body. High triglyceride levels are found in people who are overweight, have heart problems, or who have diabetes.



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