



Managing diabetes

Learning about diabetes may help you manage your condition. Keep reading to learn about things you can do to help you control your diabetes.

See your healthcare provider regularly

When you have diabetes, you should see your healthcare provider regularly—even if you are feeling good. Bring a record of your home blood sugar levels. Also, bring any questions you have about your treatment plan.

At each appointment, your healthcare provider should check your:¹

- Blood pressure
- Weight
- Feet

You should also review your treatment plan with your healthcare provider.

The buildup of glucose in the blood damages the lining of the blood vessels causing narrowing of the vessels from plaque (fatty material) so blood doesn't move as freely. The plaque slows the blood flow to vital tissue and organs typically causing complications.

To reduce your risk of these complications, you should have the following exams at least once a year:¹

- **Retinal or dilated eye exam.** This helps find glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and other eye conditions.
- **HbA1C test.** This is a simple blood test to measure your blood sugar over a three-month period. Your healthcare provider may check it more often if it is too high.
- **Cholesterol profile test.** This measures cholesterol (including total cholesterol, HDL and LDL) and triglycerides in your blood.
- **Kidney test.** A urine test to check for a protein called albumin can find kidney disease or nephropathy. Your healthcare provider may also have you take a blood test to check your glomerular filtration rate, which tells how well your kidneys are filtering.
- **Dental exam.** It's important to have a dental exam every 6–12 months. Be sure to tell your dentist that you have diabetes.

You should also have an annual flu shot. Talk to your healthcare provider to determine if you need a pneumonia shot.

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Other ways to help manage your diabetes

Be sure to monitor your blood sugar levels and take your medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

An important part of managing diabetes may be making some healthy lifestyle changes. These changes may include:

- Reaching and/or keeping a healthy body weight²
- Eating a healthy diet with nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and less animal products, refined carbohydrates and sweets; avoid skipping meals and limit salt and alcohol intake³
- Staying active to help manage your blood sugar levels and body weight³
- Managing stress and getting the right amount of sleep³
- Avoiding or quitting smoking²

Your healthcare provider may also prescribe an oral medication and/or insulin. Be sure to take all your medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

Your diabetes checklist

Use this handy checklist to track your tests.⁴ Work with your healthcare provider to determine your target ranges and record the date of your last exam and your results.

At every visit	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
Weight			
Blood pressure			
Foot exam			

Every 3–6 months	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
HbA1C			

At least once a year	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
Cholesterol profile			
Kidney test			
Complete foot exam			
Eye exam			
Dental exam			
Flu shot			

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References

¹National Library of Medicine – MedlinePlus

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000082.htm>

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/health.html>

³Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-management/ART-20047963>

⁴National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes/4-steps>

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