



Healthy Habits to Last a Lifetime

The National Institutes of Health outlines four steps toward a lifetime of effective diabetes management.

Step 1: Learn about diabetes

Type 1 diabetes: Your body does not make insulin. You need to take insulin every day to live.

Type 2 diabetes: Your body does not make or use insulin well. You may need to take pills or insulin to help control your diabetes. Type 2 is the most common type of diabetes.

Gestational diabetes: Some women get this when pregnant. It usually goes away after childbirth. But even if it goes away, these women and their children have a greater chance of getting diabetes later in life.

Actions you can take:

- Ask your health care team what type of diabetes you have
- Take a diabetes education class and/or join a support group

Step 2: Know your diabetes ABCs

A – A1C test

This is a blood test that measures your average blood sugar level over the past three months. It is different from the blood sugar checks you do each day. The A1C goal for many people with diabetes is below 7. It may be different for you.

B – Blood pressure

Blood pressure is the force of your blood against the walls of your blood vessels. If your blood pressure gets too high, your heart works too hard. It can cause a heart attack, stroke, and damage your kidneys and eyes. The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 140/90. It may be different for you.

C – Cholesterol

LDL or “bad” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. It can cause a heart attack or stroke. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels.

Actions you can take:

- Ask what your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers are and what they should be
- Ask what you can do to reach your ABC goals
- Record your numbers to track your progress



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Step 3: Learn how to live with diabetes

Manage stress

- Stress can raise your blood sugar — try deep breathing, gardening, taking a walk, meditating, working on a hobby, listening to your favorite music or asking for help if you feel down

Eat well

- Make a diabetes meal plan with help from your health care team, and try these **guidelines** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Be active

- Set a goal to be more active most days of the week — start slowly by taking 10-minute walks three times a day
- Twice a week work to increase your muscle strength — use stretch bands, practice yoga, do heavy gardening (digging and planting with tools) or try pushups

Stick with a daily routine

- Take your diabetes medications even when you feel good
- Check your feet for cuts, blisters, red spots and swelling, and call your health care team right away about any sores that do not go away
- Brush your teeth and floss to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy
- Stop smoking — ask for help to quit by calling 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)
- Keep track of your blood sugar and a record of your blood sugar numbers
- Check your blood pressure if your doctor advises and keep a record of it

Actions you can take:

- Report any changes in your health
- Ask your doctor about safe ways to be more physically active
- Ask your doctor if you need aspirin to prevent a heart attack or stroke
- Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your medicines or if you have any side effects



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Step 4: Get routine medical care

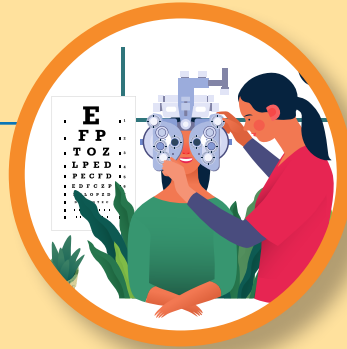
At least twice each year

Blood pressure check
Foot check
Weight check
A1C test
Self-care plan review



At least one each year

Cholesterol test
Comprehensive foot exam
Dental exam
Dilated eye exam
Flu shot
Urine and blood tests



At least once in your lifetime

Pneumonia shot
Hepatitis B shot



Actions you can take:

- Ask your health care team about these and other tests you may need
- Ask what your results mean
- Write down the date and time of your next visit