

# Manage Your Diabetes



**Patient Guide**



This guide is designed to help people with diabetes get the best care possible at the best price possible. It provides:

- Key behaviors to help you stay healthy
- Questions to ask your health care team and insurance provider
- Space for contact information of your diabetes care team
- Tools for tracking your medications, measurements and labs

Bring this booklet with you to your health care appointments to help you remember which questions to ask, take notes and share important medical information with all of your providers.

To learn more about diabetes, visit [diabetesnc.com/about](https://diabetesnc.com/about).

*This guide was created by the North Carolina Diabetes Advisory Council (DAC). The DAC works to reduce the burden of diabetes through coordination among the many stakeholders in diabetes prevention and control in North Carolina.*



**North Carolina Diabetes Advisory Council**

# Table of Contents

My Diabetes Care Team	4
About Diabetes	5
Lifestyle Changes	6
Watch Out for High and Low Blood Sugar	10
Talking with Your Family	12
Questions for Health Care and Insurance Providers	12
Space for Notes	14
My Medications	16
Education	18
Target Blood Sugar Range	18
Exams and Lab Tests	19



Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

My patient portal address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact List for My Diabetes Care Team

Primary Care Provider	Name:
Phone:	Email:
• Appointments	
Phone:	Email:
• Nurse Line	
Phone:	Email:
Insurance Customer Service	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Pharmacy	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Certified Diabetes Educator	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Dietitian	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Foot Doctor (Podiatrist)	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Eye Doctor (Ophthalmologist)	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Kidney Doctor (Nephrologist)	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Dentist	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Audiologist	Name:
Phone:	Email:
Other	
Phone:	Email:
Other	
Phone:	Email:

# About Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body does not produce any or enough insulin to efficiently change food into energy. This leads to excess sugar in the blood. Excess blood sugar can lead to blindness, kidney failure, amputations, heart attack and stroke.

The best way to prevent complications is by making lifestyle changes and taking prescribed medicines (including insulin when necessary).



# Lifestyle Changes

**Follow the recommendations below to help you manage your blood sugar, control complications from diabetes, increase your energy and feel better overall.**



## Manage Your Weight

If you are overweight, losing a few pounds through physical activity and healthy eating can help you to better control your blood sugar. See the body mass index (BMI) calculator at

[myeatsmartmovemore.com/BMI](http://myeatsmartmovemore.com/BMI) to find your weight category. For more information about managing your weight, visit [diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/weight-loss](http://diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/weight-loss).



## Eat Smart

Work with your health care provider to learn how to count carbohydrates and eat balanced meals and snacks that help you maintain safe blood sugar levels. See

[diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates](http://diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates) for a head start.

Eat healthy sources of protein, healthy sources of fat and a variety of vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Drink water instead of soda or other sugary drinks, and be sure to control your portion sizes. For tips, visit [myeatsmartmovemore.com](http://myeatsmartmovemore.com).



## Get Regular Physical Activity

Adults need at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity, such as brisk walking. Aim for 30 minutes most days of the week. Two or

more days a week, also do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups. Visit [esmmweighless.com/tools/strength-exercises](https://esmmweighless.com/tools/strength-exercises) for examples.

Talk to your health care provider about moving more. Ask your provider if you need to change the amount of medicine you take or the food you eat before doing physical activity.



## Quit Smoking

Smokers with diabetes are more likely to suffer from heart disease, stroke, circulation problems, nerve damage, blindness, kidney disease and early death. For more

information about quitting, visit [quitlineenc.com](https://quitlineenc.com) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.



## Get Enough Sleep

Adults 18–64 years old need seven to nine hours of sleep per night, and adults 65 years and older need seven to eight hours. To get a good night's sleep:

- Go to bed around the same time each night.
- Exercise, but no later than 2–3 hours before bedtime.
- Don't have caffeine late in the day.
- Don't eat too close to bedtime.
- Don't work or watch TV in the bedroom.
- Keep the bedroom a comfortable, cool temperature.

For more information, visit [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/sleep/healthy\\_sleep.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf).



## Participate in Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES)

DSMES offers one-on-one and group education, so you can learn how to manage your

diabetes. Each insurance provider has guidelines for covering DSMES. If you are uninsured or underinsured, you may be able to get a discount. Ask your primary care provider for a referral to DSMES.

To find a DSMES in your area, visit [diabetesnc.com/DSMES](http://diabetesnc.com/DSMES).





## Follow Your Diabetes Treatment Plan

Your health care providers will help you come up with a plan for managing your diabetes that includes:

- Your target blood sugar range and A1c goals
- Blood sugar checks (how often you should test your own blood sugar)
- Your medications (type, dose, when to take)
- Which health screenings and health care appointments you need and how often
- Guidance on lifestyle changes you should make

Stick to your treatment plan, and let your provider know if you have concerns about your plan.

To learn more about treating diabetes visit [diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care](https://diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care).



# Watch Out for High and Low Blood Sugar



## High Blood Sugar

Hyperglycemia, or high blood sugar, can be caused by any of the following:

- Not taking diabetes medication, taking too little and/or taking it at the wrong time
- Eating too much or not eating the appropriate balance of food
- Illness or infection
- Physical or emotional stress/trauma

### Symptoms:



Need to urinate frequently



Drowsiness



Nausea



Extreme hunger and/or thirst



Blurred vision

**If you have any symptoms listed above, test your blood sugar right away to avoid serious problems.**

### **If your blood sugar is above 240 mg/dL:**

- Call your diabetes care team.
- Take a corrective dose of insulin (if your health care provider has instructed you on how to do this).

### **If your blood sugar is above your target, but below 240 mg/dL:**

- Get some physical activity.
- Drink extra water.
- Call your diabetes care team if you continue to have high blood sugar.

**You, your friends and your family should know the symptoms of high and low blood sugar. It may save your life.**

## Low Blood Sugar

Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, can be caused by:

- Taking too much diabetes medication and/or taking it at the wrong time
- Skipping meals or eating less than usual
- Increasing your physical activity without eating enough

### Symptoms:



Shaking



Fast heartbeat



Sweating



Anxiety



Dizziness



Extreme hunger



Weakness and tiredness



Irritability



Headache

**If you have any symptoms listed above, test your blood sugar right away to avoid serious problems.**

**If your blood sugar is below 70 mg/dL, it is too low. Follow the Rule of 15:**

- Eat or drink something with 15 grams of sugar (e.g., 1/2 cup regular soda or orange juice, handful of Skittles or raisins).
- After 15 minutes, recheck your blood sugar. If it is still too low, eat or drink another 15 grams of sugar.
- If it is still too low after another 15 minutes, call your primary care provider or emergency service.

## Talking with Your Family

### **Encourage your friends and family members to:**

- Learn your target blood sugar range
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of high and low blood sugar
- Remind you to test your blood sugar frequently
- Know what to do if your blood sugar is too high or too low

## Talking with Your Health Care Team

***We know there is a lot to learn about diabetes, and sometimes you don't know what to ask. Here are some suggestions.***

### **Questions to ask when scheduling your appointment:**

- About how long will this appointment take from the time I check in until I go home?
- Will you please explain to me everything I'll have to pay for my visit and labs?
- When can I expect my lab results?
- Will someone go over my lab results with me?

### **Questions for the nurse or medical assistant:**

- What was my last A1c and/or fasting blood glucose?
- What is my blood pressure?
- Are you going to check my toenails and feet for sensation and pulses?

### **Questions for the doctor, physician assistant, family nurse practitioner:**

- How are my kidneys?
- Do I need to take any tests today?
- Based on my last numbers, do I need to see a specialist?
- Will you refer me to Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support?

### **Questions for the certified diabetes educator or dietitian:**

- How can I get my A1c to goal?
- What do I do if I take too much insulin?

- What do I do if I forget to take my insulin or medications?
- What do I do if I am sick?
- What should my blood sugar target be?
- What do I do if my blood sugar is too high even after taking my insulin?
- Can you give me meal and snack recommendations?
- When is my next diabetes class or appointment?

### **Questions for the pharmacist or pharmacy technician:**

- Do all of my medicines work together?
- If I cut a pill in half, will I still get some benefit?
- Is there a way that you can make my prescriptions due on my pay schedule?
- I think I am supposed to take this medicine [1, 2 or 3] times per day [with or without food]. Is that right?
- Is there a way for me to get this medicine cheaper?

## **Talking with Your Insurance Company or Doctor's Office Manager**

- What blood sugar meter does my insurance plan cover?
- What happens if I need a talking meter or a pump?
- How many strips can I get at one time? What if my doctor prescribes more than that?
- How can I get the best price for my medications?
- What do I have to pay for these medicines my doctor prescribed?
- What do I have to pay for my doctor visit?
- Do I have to pay extra for labs? If so, which ones?
- Do I have to pay extra for other things like x-rays?
- What do I have to pay for a visit to the kidney doctor or other specialist?
- How many diabetes education visits do I get with my insurance plan?



[illegible]

## Notes

[illegible]

# My Medications

[illegible]



# Education

## Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support

**How often:** First year, more than 2 hours. Then once per year for 2 hours, or more frequently if medications change or complications occur.

**Dates of meetings:**

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**Place of meeting:**

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**Contact:**

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## Target Blood Sugar Range

**Before a meal:**  -  mg/dL

**1-2 hours after starting a meal:**

Less than  -  mg/dL



# Exams and Lab Tests for Adults with Diabetes<sup>1</sup>

*These measurements are taken  
at every visit.*

## Blood Pressure

Date of last check:

Result:

## Weight

It is easier to manage diabetes at a healthy weight. A health care provider will determine your body mass index (BMI) by using your height and weight.

Date of last check:

Result:

*This test should be performed every  
three months, or as often as recommended  
by your health care provider.*

## A1c

General Goal: Less than 7 percent. Your health care provider may set a higher or lower goal based on your needs.

Date of last check:

Result:

1. This section is modified from Health Targets that appeared in Diabetes Forecast in 2014 from the American Diabetes Association.

***These tests should be performed at least once a year.***

### **LDL Cholesterol**

General Goal: Less than 100 mg/dL. Under 70 mg/dL for people with cardiovascular disease.

Date of last check:

Result:

### **HDL Cholesterol**

General Goal: Greater than 40 mg/dL for men and greater than 50 mg/dL for women.

Date of last check:

Result:

### **Triglycerides**

General Goal: Less than 150 mg/dL.

Date of last check:

Result:

### **Urine Albumin-to-Creatinine Ratio**

General Goal: Less than 30 mg/g.

Date of last check:

Result:

### **Nerve Function**

Date of last check:

Result:

### **Dilated Eye Exam**

Date of last check:

Result:



**North Carolina Diabetes Advisory Council**