



Live well with diabetes

Diabetes care tips

If you have diabetes, you probably already know that you are at a higher risk for health problems such as heart attack or stroke, eye problems, nerve damage, kidney problems, and teeth and gum problems. You may not know how simple it can be to live well and avoid health problems. We can help.

Know your ABCs

The first step to living well with diabetes is understanding how your “numbers” impact your overall health. This includes your A1C, Blood pressure and Cholesterol. If you keep these numbers under control, it can dramatically lower your chance of health problems.

A. A1C

A1C 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 might do each day. The A1C goal for many people with diabetes is below 7. Ask your doctor what your goal should be.

B. Blood pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the wall of your blood vessels. If your blood pressure gets too high, it makes your heart work too hard. Your blood pressure goal should be below 140/80, unless your doctor helps you set a different goal.

C. Cholesterol

There are two kinds of cholesterol in your blood: LDL and HDL. LDL or “bad” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask your doctor what your cholesterol numbers should be, and if they are not where they should be, ask what you can do about them.

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Your 'live better' checklist

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- ✓ **Stress less** Stress can raise your blood sugar. Try deep breathing, gardening, taking a walk, meditating, working on a hobby, or listening to your favourite music.

 - ✓ **Ask for help** If you feel down, don't go it alone. Talk to a mental health counselor, support group, member of the clergy, friend or family member.

 - ✓ **Eat well** Choose foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk, and cheese. Drink water instead of juice and regular soda.

 - ✓ **Be physically active** Set a goal to be physically active for 30 minutes most days of the week. Start slow by taking 10-minute walks, three times a day.

 - ✓ **Know what to do every day** Take your medicines even when you feel good. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your medicine or if you experience any side effects.

 - ✓ **Check your feet** Be on the lookout every day for cuts, blisters, red spots and swelling. Call your doctor right away about any sores.

 - ✓ **Brush your teeth** Brush and floss every day to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy.

 - ✓ **Keep track of your numbers** Discuss with your doctor how often and when to check your blood sugar and blood pressure. Keep a record of the numbers if your doctor says it's appropriate.

 - ✓ **Don't smoke** Ask for help to quit. Many smokers do quit — and you can, too.
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Get routine care to stay healthy. See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early.

Keep your diabetes in check —
get on the path to a healthier you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Diabetes Education Program, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/index.html>, 1 March 2017.

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