

# Diabetes Self-Care Guide



Your personal guide.....  
what you do each day really matters.



## How to Use This Guide:

Working with your health care team is important. Use this booklet when you meet with your team. It can help you know what to ask at your visits, and it can also help you learn how to care for your diabetes. This guide is intended to give basic information about diabetes and is most appropriate for people older than 18 years of age. This guide is not intended to be used for medical advice.

## What is Diabetes?

Diabetes changes the way the body uses the food you eat. The body turns food into glucose (sugar) and uses this glucose (sugar) for energy. Insulin is a hormone that helps move glucose (sugar) from the blood into the body's cells. When glucose (sugar) is not at the normal level, it can harm the eyes, heart, kidneys, and feet. Diabetes is a condition that never goes away, but it can be managed.

### Type 1 Diabetes

With type 1 diabetes, the body cannot make insulin on its own. A person needs to use insulin. Type 1 diabetes can happen at any age.

### Type 2 Diabetes

With type 2 diabetes, the body makes some insulin but not enough. Or, the body may not be able to use insulin as it should. Medicine and insulin may be needed.

## What is Diabetes Self-Care?

You are the most important person when it comes to taking care of your diabetes. Self-care helps you learn how to manage your diabetes. This booklet gives you diabetes self-care tips to help you:

- ✓ Be active
- ✓ Fill prescriptions and take medicines
- ✓ Eat healthy
- ✓ Monitor your blood glucose (sugar) at home
- ✓ Know the numbers that are right for you
- ✓ Go to health visits
- ✓ Wear a medical identification bracelet/necklace

- ✓ Work with your health care team
- ✓ Learn to deal with the feelings that go with diabetes

Diabetes information and care can be hard to understand. Your health care team wants you to be successful. Be sure to tell your health care team if you are having problems with any treatment.

## Health Care Team

There are many people who can help you with your diabetes. Your health care team will talk with you about how to best manage your diabetes with healthy eating, being active, and taking medicine.

### Names and Phone Numbers

Case manager		Foot doctor	
Certified diabetes educator (CDE)		Health educator	
Chronic care manager		Mental health professionals	
Dentist		Pharmacist	
Registered dietitian nutritionist		Primary Care doctor/nurse practitioner/physician assistant	
Endocrinologist		Nurse	
Exercise specialist/physical therapist		Social worker	
Eye doctor		Other:	

## Ask Questions

Whenever you ask questions, you and your health care team learn more about each other. Together you can decide on the best ways to care for your diabetes.

Example questions you may want to ask:

1. How can I learn more about diabetes, eating healthy, and being active?
2. How can my family, friends, or others in my community help me with my diabetes?
3. What if I cannot afford my medicine or other diabetes supplies or services? Talk to your health care team or health plan (insurance) about:
  - a. Lower cost options
  - b. Medicine-assistance programs
4. What does my health plan (insurance) cover?
  - a. Call your health plan (insurance) for your benefits.
  - b. If you do not know what your health plan (insurance) is, ask someone on your health care team.
  - c. If you do not have a health plan (insurance), contact your county Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/consumer/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/consumer/index.htm)
5. How can I take steps to quit smoking or using nicotine products?

## Be Prepared

Plan ahead and have enough supplies to safely manage your diabetes. Carry your glucose meter and strips and treatment for low blood glucose (sugar). Wear a medical ID that says you have diabetes. In addition:

### Low blood sugar

- If your blood glucose (sugar) is below 70 mg/dL but above 50 mg/dL eat 15 grams of carbohydrate such as ½ cup of juice, 1 tablespoon of honey or sugar, 3 or 4 glucose tablets, or ½ cup regular soda (made with sugar).

- If your blood glucose (sugar) is below 50 mg/dL eat 30 grams of carbohydrate such as 1 cup of juice, 2 tablespoons of honey or sugar, 6 to 8 glucose tablets, or 1 cup of regular soda.

## Travel

[www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/traveling-with-diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/traveling-with-diabetes.html)

- Carry a list of your medicine and when you take it
- Carry insulin and medication with you so they do not get lost
- Take extra medicine in case trip lasts longer than expected
- Carry food with you as meal time may change
- Carry a list of your doctor/clinic and pharmacy name and phone number
- Plan for change in time zones

## Weather

[www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/features/disaster-planning-chronic-disease](http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/features/disaster-planning-chronic-disease)

- Carry a list of medicine with prescription numbers
- Keep enough nonperishable food and water to last for at least three days
- Have cash and prepaid phone card
- Carry a list of important numbers and phone numbers (bank account, credit card, insurance, family members, pharmacy, doctor)
- Have a first aid kit, flashlight, radio, batteries, candles, matches

## Sick days

- Check for fever
- Keep clear liquid foods with sugar (7Up, ginger ale, popsicles, Jello, etc.)
- Have medicine for fever and nausea
- Check blood glucose (sugar) more often

# Recommended Care When You Have Diabetes

Talk to a member of your health care team about when to get the following:

	<b>Goal*</b>	<b>How Often?*</b>	<b>Why done?*</b>
A1C	Less than 7% for most people	Every 3 to 6 months	Checks blood glucose (sugar) over the last 2 to 3 months
Blood pressure	Less than 140/90 for most adults	Every visit; at least 4 times a year	High blood pressure with diabetes greatly increases the risk of heart attack or stroke
Cholesterol panel	Depends on age and health	Once a year	Measures blood fats such as total, LDL- (bad) cholesterol and HDL (good) cholesterol + triglycerides
Kidney profile			Over time high blood glucose (sugar) and blood pressure damage the kidneys, beginning long before you have symptoms
Urine albumin-creatinine ratio (ACR)	30 mg/g or less	Both tests: Once a year	Checks how your kidneys are working
Estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)	more than 60		Number tells you how your kidneys are filtering

\* Your goal will be determined with your health care provider based on your personal needs.

## Recommended Exams

### How Often? What happens (during the visit)?

Diabetes visit/exam	Every 3 to 6 months	Discuss plan of care and any questions
Dental exam	Every 6 months	Check mouth and teeth cleaning
Stress exam	Every year	Answer questions on how you feel about your diabetes
Eye exam	Every year	Check eyes for changes
Foot exam	Every year	Check feet for changes to skin or loss of feeling
Physical exam	Every year	Looks, feels or listens to different parts of a person's body

## Immunizations

Ask someone from your health care team which vaccines are right for you.

### When?

Flu/influenza	Every year	Any age
Pneumococcal	Once before age 65 years	Booster age 65 years or older
Tdap	If not vaccinated as child, any age	Td booster every 10 years
Hepatitis B	If not vaccinated as a child, one set of 3 vaccines	Adults under the age of 60 years, consult doctor if over 60.
Zoster/shingles	Once plus a booster	Age 50 years and older

# Recommended Self-Care

## Physical Activity Level



Targets:

- Very active: 30 minutes on 5 days per week
- Strength exercises: 2 days per week

Find activities you enjoy

## Healthy Eating/Meal Choices



Healthy meal choices and serving sizes

See a registered dietitian nutritionist: 3 to 4 visits over 3 to 6 months

## Diabetes Self-Care Education



See a diabetes educator at diagnosis then 3 to 4 visits over 6 months then yearly.

## Home Blood Glucose (Sugar) Checks



Targets:

- Before meals: 80 to 130 mg/dL
- 1 to 2 hours after starting to eat meal: less than 180 mg/dL

Ask your health care team how often you should check your blood glucose (sugar).

## Home Blood Pressure Checks



Target: Lower than 140/90

Ask your health care team how often you should check your blood pressure.

## Tobacco/Vaping



Target: Quit tobacco or vaping products

Ask your health care team how to quit.

## Foot Care



- Look at own feet daily for changes in skin or loss of feeling
- Wash feet daily with mild soap and warm water
- Wear shoes and socks that fit
- Remove socks and shoes whenever at a diabetes health appointment

## Local Support

When it comes to your health, you know yourself the best. Learn as much as you can about diabetes. Help from your community can include support groups and your library. Check with your health care team to find a self-management education program in your area. Other trusted resources are listed at the end of this guide.



# Personal Diabetes Care Record

A diabetes appointment is different from a visit for a physical exam; both are important.

		Dates			
<b>LABS</b>	A1C				
	Cholesterol panel				
	Kidney profile–Urine albumin-creatinine ratio (ACR), Estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)				
<b>EXAMS</b>	Blood pressure and weight				
	Dental exam				
	Physical exam				
	Dilated eye exam				
	Foot exam				
	Emotional/sexual health				
<b>IMMUNIZATIONS</b>	Flu/influenza				
	Hepatitis B				
	Pneumococcal				
	Tdap/Td				
	Zoster/shingles				
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Self-management education				
	Nutrition				
	Physical activity and exercise				
	Home glucose (sugar) monitoring				

# Talk with Your Health Care Provider/Team



Take the first step. Be an active member of your health care team! Here are some tips for talking with them:

- Make a list of questions, take the list to your visit, and ask the most important question first.
- Take someone with you to each visit to help you remember what was talked about.
- Bring a list of all the medicines, vitamins, and supplements you take.
- Ask about anything you don't understand.
- Talk about:
  - ✓ any new medicines
  - ✓ changes in your health or life
  - ✓ tobacco use or vaping
  - ✓ having enough food to eat
  - ✓ housing
  - ✓ family and caretaking
  - ✓ transportation
  - ✓ employment
  - ✓ personal safety
  - ✓ alcohol or drug use

This document is available online at:  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/P-43081.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/P-43081.htm)

## Additional Resources

### LOCAL

#### **Aging and Disability Resource Centers-Wisconsin**

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/index.htm)

#### **Community information and referral services**

Dial 211 on telephone

#### **Diabetes in Wisconsin: WI Department of Health Services**

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/diabetes/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/diabetes/index.htm)

#### **Diabetes Local**

[www.diabeteslocal.org/home](http://www.diabeteslocal.org/home)

#### **Healthy Living with Diabetes: WI Institute for Healthy Aging,**

608-243-5690

[www.wihealthyaging.org](http://www.wihealthyaging.org)

#### **Medigap Helpline-Medicare Counseling for WI Residents,**

800-242-1060

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/benefit-specialists/medicare-counseling.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/benefit-specialists/medicare-counseling.htm)

**National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin**, 800-543-6393  
[www.kidneywi.org](http://www.kidneywi.org)

**Prevent Blindness Wisconsin**, 414-765-0505  
[www.wisconsin.preventblindness.org/diabetes-related-eye-disease](http://www.wisconsin.preventblindness.org/diabetes-related-eye-disease)

**Wisconsin Public Libraries**  
[www.publiclibraries.com/state/wisconsin](http://www.publiclibraries.com/state/wisconsin)

## **NATIONAL**

**Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**, 800-877-1600  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

**American Association of Diabetes Educators**, 800-338-3633  
[www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)

**American Diabetes Association**, 800-342-2383  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

**American Heart Association's Check. Change. Control. Tracker**  
[www.ccctracker.com](http://www.ccctracker.com)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html)

**Free Diabetes ID Necklaces are Offered at**  
[www.diabeteswellness.net/free-diabetes-id-necklace](http://www.diabeteswellness.net/free-diabetes-id-necklace)

**JDRF - juvenile diabetes**, 800-533-2873  
[www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)

**Know Diabetes by Heart**  
[www.knowdiabetebyheart.org](http://www.knowdiabetebyheart.org)

**National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**  
[www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes)

**Tobacco Quit Line**, 800-784-8669 or 800-QUITNOW  
[www.ctri.wisc.edu/quit-line](http://www.ctri.wisc.edu/quit-line)



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
*of* HEALTH SERVICES**

Division of Public Health  
Chronic Disease Prevention Program

Wisconsin Diabetes Advisory Group and other partners

P- 43081 (01/2020)