

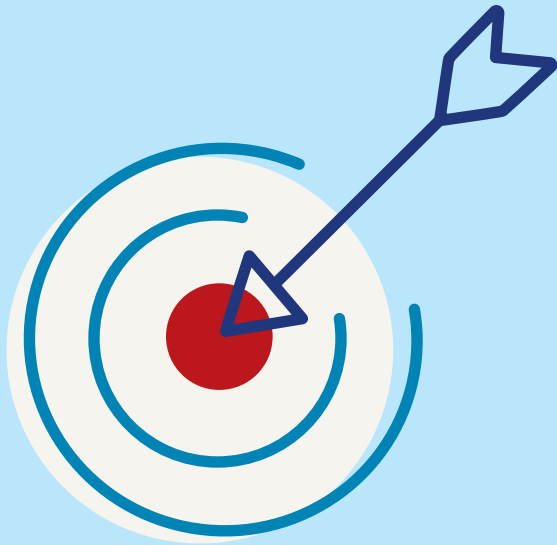


# Caring for your whole self while living with diabetes

**If you are living with diabetes, you are not alone.** About 34 million people in the U.S. are living with the condition, and there are about 1.5 million new diagnoses every year. Fortunately, new treatments, tools and lifestyle changes are helping people manage diabetes and live life to the fullest.

Alongside your medical team, Walgreens is here to support you. We created this pamphlet and others to help you better understand diabetes and give you tips and advice you can use every day. If you have any questions, just ask your Walgreens pharmacist or visit us at [Walgreens.com/Diabetes](https://www.walgreens.com/Diabetes).

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### **Blood glucose goals**

Knowing your most recent A1C results and your healthy range of blood glucose levels helps you quickly identify when you are out of range and may need to take action.

**Everyone's goals will look different, but here's a general guide to safe levels:**

- **A1C**—less than 7.0%
- **Fasting blood sugar**—80 to 130 mg/dL
- **Blood sugar 1 to 2 hours after eating**—less than 180 mg/dL

If your numbers are often out of range, work with your healthcare team to make a plan to bring your levels back to the safe zone.

### **Hyperglycemia**

This happens when you have blood sugar levels that are too high.

#### **Common causes:**

- Being sick or stressed
- Eating more than planned
- Not taking your medication properly
- Depression and anxiety leading to poor diabetes self-care behaviors

#### **Signs and symptoms:**

- Needing to urinate (pee) more often
- Feeling thirsty
- Having blurred vision
- Feeling tired

If left untreated, hyperglycemia may lead to serious complications affecting your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart. It's important to get your blood sugar levels consistently back in the safe range.

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### **Hypoglycemia**

This happens when you have blood sugar levels that are too low, usually below 70 mg/dL.

#### **Common causes:**

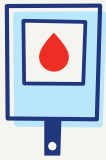
- Taking too much insulin or other diabetes medication
- Missing a meal
- Exercising more than normal
- Drinking alcohol

#### **Signs and symptoms:**

- Feeling shaky, nervous, anxious or confused
- Sweating or having chills
- Being irritable
- Being hungry or nauseous
- Having a fast heart rate

**Talk to your healthcare provider for more help in managing hyperglycemic or hypoglycemic symptoms.**





## Checking blood glucose levels

Checking your blood glucose levels is an important part of managing diabetes.

### Glucose meters

Meters tell you how much your blood glucose levels change after eating different foods, taking medication or exercising. You can share your glucose levels with your healthcare team to guide your treatment plan.

Most meters will save your results. You can use an app on your phone or a written daily log to track your levels. Bring your meter, phone or paper log to each healthcare provider visit.

**Meters work by measuring the glucose in a drop of blood. You get this drop of blood by poking your fingertip with a lancet. Here's how it works:**

- Wash your hands
- Insert a test strip into your meter
- Use a lancet to get a drop of blood from your fingertip
- Touch and hold the edge of the test strip to the drop of blood until you get a result on the meter's display

All meters are a little different, so read your user's manual for specific instructions. Your healthcare provider will give you guidance on how often and when to test your blood glucose.

### Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs)

CGMs have a sensor that stays under the skin to track blood glucose levels throughout the day. They test about every five minutes. Because you can see your levels at any time and how they change over time, CGMs can take some of the guesswork out of daily patterns. You also don't have to prick your finger as often. To see if a CGM is a good option for you, talk to your healthcare provider.



### Physical activity

Regular physical activity can greatly improve how your body uses insulin and bring your glucose levels to a safe range.

If you are new to exercising, start with small goals. Focus on getting moving for a few minutes at least two to three days a week. As you feel comfortable, increase your goals slowly.

#### Here are some guidelines:

- **Adults** At least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity spread over 3 or more days per week
- **Children and adolescents** At least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous exercise at least three days per week

Before you start any new physical activity, it's important to check with your healthcare provider.





## Immunizations

People living with diabetes may find it harder for their immune systems to fight infection. The safest way to protect yourself is to get the right vaccines. According to the CDC, you should stay up to date with:

- Yearly flu shot
- Pneumonia (pneumococcal) vaccine
- Tdap vaccine, to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Shingles (herpes zoster) vaccine

There may be other vaccines you should get depending on your lifestyle, travel habits and other factors. Your pharmacist can guide you on which vaccines are right for you.

## Foot care

Poorly controlled diabetes can result in nerve damage, making it harder to feel pain, heat or cold on your skin. For feet, this might cause you to miss a cut, blister or sore, or notice that water is too hot for your skin. Small problems can become serious if they aren't treated early, so it's important to take care of your feet and inspect them often. Here are a few ways to help keep your feet healthy:

- Examine your feet every day. Use a mirror if you have trouble or ask a family member to help.
- Moisturize your feet and skin daily with creams or lotions that are fragrance- and dye-free.
- Keep blood flowing as it should to your legs and feet by:
  - Raising your feet when you're sitting down
  - Wearing safe and sturdy footwear at all times
  - Wiggling toes and moving ankles up and down for five minutes, two to three times daily

## Health exams

Working alongside your healthcare provider and telling them about any changes in your condition will help them adjust your therapy if needed. Your healthcare provider can also help keep you on track for regular eye exams, kidney function tests and foot exams.





If you are overweight or have obesity, work with your healthcare team to create a weight loss plan. By losing weight, people with type 2 diabetes can reduce health risks and control blood sugar better.

### Eating right

Balancing meals and eating the right amount of food can help you manage your blood sugar and your weight. The Diabetes Plate Method can make it easier.

#### Here's how it works using a 9-inch plate:

- Half of your plate should have nonstarchy vegetables, such as salad, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage or carrots
- One-quarter of your plate should have whole grain or starchy foods such as potatoes, rice or pasta (or skip the starch and have nonstarchy veggies on three-quarters of the plate)
- One-quarter of your plate should have lean proteins such as chicken, turkey, fish, tofu or eggs
- Choose water or a low-calorie drink—water is the best choice because it contains no calories or carbohydrates and has no effect on blood sugar



## Resources

- American Diabetes Association standards of medical care in diabetes—2021. *Diabetes Care*. 2021;44(1): S73-S84. <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc21-S006>.
- Physical activity guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition 2018. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf)
- Diabetes type 1 and type 2 and adult vaccination. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/diabetes.html). Reviewed May 2, 2016. Accessed December 16, 2020.
- Prevent complications. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/diabetes.html). Reviewed August 1, 2019. Accessed December 16, 2020.
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- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). American Diabetes Association Web site. <https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/medication-management/blood-glucose-testing-and-control/hypoglycemia>. Accessed December 16, 2020.

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