

Know How, Know Now

4 Steps to Good Health

If you are diagnosed with diabetes the sooner you take control of your blood sugars and become the leader of your diabetes care team, the sooner you can get on with life lived to its fullest. Here is the National Diabetes Education Program's suggestions for a four-step plan to get on track. For more information visit their website at NDEP.gov or call 800-438-5383.

Step 1: Learn about diabetes.

There are two types of diabetes: In both, blood glucose (blood sugar) is too high and that can lead to serious health problems if it is not brought down into a healthy range.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body does not make insulin. People with type 1 need to take insulin every day. Type 2 diabetes is caused by a combination of lifestyle and genetic factors and in means that the body cannot use the insulin it makes or does not make enough insulin. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes.

It may not be pleasant to think about, but it is important to realize that uncontrolled diabetes can lead to all kinds of serious health problems, such as heart disease and stroke, eye problems. Nerve damage, kidney problems and dental disease. You can, however, control you glucose and you will reap major benefits: You will dramatically reduce the risk of complications and you will have more energy, be in a better mood, and avoid feeling sick.

Step 2: Learn the ABCs

There are three easy test to make sure you have regularly. They will tell you how your diabetes is and let you adjust your diabetes treatment plan to improve your overall health.

*A for the A1C test that tells you how your glucose control has been over the past 3 months. The A1C goal for most people is below 7.

*B for Blood Pressure. The goal for most people with diabetes is 130/80. Elevated blood pressure can damage kidneys, eyes and heart.

C for Cholesterol.

The LDL goal for most people is less than 100.

The HDL goal for most people is above 40. Cardiovascular disease is the number one complications of diabetes and an important issue for 100 percent of people diagnosed with the disease.

Step 3: Manage your diabetes.

Your daily choices about diet and exercise have a huge influence on your glucose levels and your long-term health. Here are some useful suggestions for creating the healthy life you want.

* Establish a diabetes meal plan. If you do not have one, ask your health care team about one.

* Eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, dry peas or beans, whole grains, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese.

* Keep fish and lean meat and poultry portion to about 3 ounces (or the size of a deck of cards). Bake, broil, or grill it.

- * Eat foods that have less fat and salt.

- * Eat foods with more fiber such as whole grains cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta.

- * Get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week.

Brisk walking is a great way to move more.

- * Stay at a healthy weight by using your meal plan and getting more physical activity.

- * Ask for help if you feel depressed or blue—depression is more frequent in those with diabetes and is known to make diabetes more severe. A mental health counselor, support group, member of the clergy, friend, or family member who will listen to your concerns may help you feel better.

- * Learn to manage stress. Stress can raise your blood glucose. While it is hard to remove stress from your life, you can learn to handle it.

- * Stop smoking. Ask for help to quit.

- * Take your prescribed diabetes medicines even when you feel good. Ask your doctor if you need a daily aspirin to prevent a heart attack or stroke. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your medicines or if you have any side effects that keep you from taking them.

- * Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Call your health care team right away about any sores that do not go away. Most diabetes-related amputations can be prevented with care and attention to the feet and skin.

- * Brush your teeth and floss every day to avoid problems with your mouth, teeth, or gums

- * Check your blood glucose. You may want to test it one or more times a day. Use the card at the back of this booklet to keep a record of your blood glucose numbers. Be sure to take this record to your doctor visits.

- * Check your blood pressure at home if your doctor advises.
- * Report any changes in your eyesight to your doctor.

Step 4: Get routine care.

Twice a year

- * See your diabetes doctor and or health care team.

At each visit be sure you have a:

- * blood pressure check
- * foot check
- * weight check
- * review of your self-care plan shown in Step 3

Two to four times a year

- * Have your A1C test.

Once each year

Have your doctor or health care team give you a:

- * cholesterol test
- * triglyceride test - a type of blood fat
- * complete foot exam
- * dental exam to check teeth and gums
- * dilated eye exam to check for eye problems
- * flu shot
- * urine and a blood test to check for kidney problems

Resources and Sources

For more information and help contact:

American Association of Diabetes Educators

1-800-TEAM-UP4 (800-832-6874)

www.diabeteseducator.org

American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)

www.diabetes.org

National Diabetes Education Program

1-800-438-5383

www.ndep.nih.gov

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

1-800-860-8747 (in English and Spanish)

www.niddk.nih.gov