



Basic Diabetes Care

Staying Healthy With Diabetes



A smiling woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is leaning over a young girl with long blonde hair. The girl is wearing a blue denim vest over a white shirt and is holding a fork over a large glass bowl filled with green salad. They are both smiling at the camera. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

This booklet was created to give you basic information about diabetes. It is not meant to take the place of meeting with your doctor on a regular basis or any diabetes education classes.

Ask your doctor or your local health department about diabetes education classes and about making an appointment with a dietitian.

Recommendations are based on Standards of Care in Diabetes - 2023.



This booklet was adapted by Passport from "Diabetes Basics" with permission from the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

Basic Diabetes Care

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What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic (long-term) disease that keeps your body from processing foods the right way. There are **3** main types of diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes:

Your body does not make insulin.

Type 2 diabetes:

Your body may still make insulin, but it does not work very well.

**With Type 1
and 2,**
sugar builds up
in your blood.

Gestational diabetes:

When you get diabetes during pregnancy.

4 things you can do to stay healthy with diabetes:



1. Check your blood sugar as often as prescribed by your doctor.



2. Take your medicine, as prescribed.



3. Eat a healthy, well balanced diet.



4. Exercise regularly*

*Always talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

You Are Not Alone...

At first, having diabetes can be hard to deal with and scary. The good news is, you are not alone. Ask your doctor about classes, support groups and other services for people with diabetes.

Why Should I Control My Blood Sugar?

Taking Control Makes a Difference!

High blood sugar can lead to problems such as:

- Heart disease or damage
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Circulation problems
- Eye disease
- Kidney disease or damage



To help prevent these problems, you can:

Every day

- Follow your meal plan
- Exercise
- Find positive ways to deal with stress
- Brush and floss your teeth
- Take your medicine as prescribed
- Check your blood sugar
- Check your feet
- Keep a log book of your blood sugar and meals

Every 6 months

- See your dentist

Every 3 to 4 months

- Have an A1c test

Every year

- Have your cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fat) checked
- Have a kidney test
- Have a foot exam
- Have a flu shot
- Have a dilated eye exam

At every office visit

- Have your feet checked
- Have your blood sugar checked
- Have your blood pressure, weight and Body Mass Index (BMI) checked
- Set your blood sugar goals
- Take your blood sugar meter and log book to your doctor visit

Other things to do

- Ask if you need any other vaccines like a pneumonia, Hep B, HPV, TDAP, shingles, or Covid shot.
- If you smoke, vape or dip, ask about a program to help you quit.
- Ask about a Sick Day Plan.



If you are overweight, losing 10 pounds can make a **big difference** in controlling your blood sugar.

Hyperglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

Hyperglycemia is also called “high blood sugar.” It is when your blood sugar level is too high – above 130 or higher than the goal you set with your doctor.

What causes it:

Too much food, too little insulin or diabetes medicine, illness, stress or less than normal activity.

How it starts:

Often starts slowly and may lead to a medical emergency if not treated.

Signs:



Always thirsty



Blurred vision



Hunger



Urinating a lot



Dry skin



Feeling sleepy

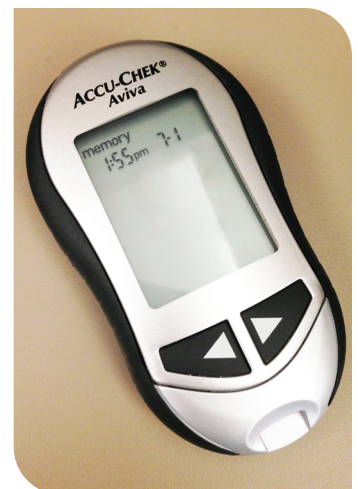


A sore that will not heal

Treating High Blood Sugar

What can you do?

- Check your blood sugar.
- If your blood sugar is higher than your goal for 3 days and you do not know why, **call your doctor!**
- Drink plenty of water
- Ask your doctor about Ketones, especially if you have Type 1 diabetes.
 - Ketones form when your body starts to use its own fat instead of sugar for energy. Ketones are a poison to your body.
 - Ketones in your blood can cause a serious condition called Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA).
 - If you have been sick and your blood sugar is above 240 or even if you have not been sick and your blood sugar is above 300, you should check for Ketones.
 - Talk to your doctor about when to check for Ketones.



Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Hypoglycemia is also called “low blood sugar.” It is when your blood sugar level is too low – 70 or below.

What causes it:

Too little food, skipping a meal, too much insulin or diabetes medicine or an increase in activity.

How it starts:

It comes on suddenly. You may pass out if it is not treated.

Signs:



Fast heartbeat



Sweating



Feeling Nervous



Hunger



Blurred vision



Headache



Feeling Irritable

Other Symptoms may also include: shaking, weakness, dizziness, confusion, clumsiness, sleepiness, and seizures.



Treating Low Blood Sugar

What can you do?

- Check your blood sugar right away. If you cannot check it, treat anyway.
- Treat by eating 3 to 4 glucose tablets or 2 to 5 hard candies that you can chew quickly (peppermints). Or, you can drink 4 ounces of fruit juice or $\frac{1}{2}$ can of regular soda pop.
- Check your blood sugar again after 15 minutes. If it is still low, treat again. If symptoms continue, **call your doctor**.
- Within 15 minutes after your symptoms go away, eat a light snack (half a peanut butter sandwich and half a glass of milk).
- Always wear your diabetes I.D. bracelet or necklace.
- Always carry glucagon if prescribed by your doctor.



Monitoring Your Blood Sugar

- Follow the instructions that come with your blood sugar meter.
- Store your strips in the original package and at room temperature.
- Do not use expired strips.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before checking your blood sugar.
- Use a new lancet each time you check your blood sugar.
- Be sure you have enough blood on your test strip.
- Throw away your lancets properly. Check with your doctor, diabetes educator, and/or trash company about the best way to throw away these items.
- Write down your blood sugar in a logbook. Bring your logbook to each doctor visit.
- Follow rules for highs and lows on pages 4 and 5.

How often should I check my blood sugar?

Ask your doctor how often you should check your blood sugar. Many people check their blood sugar several times a day.

What times should I check my blood sugar?

Ask your doctor what times are best for you. Before and 2 hours after meals, before and after exercise, and anytime you feel different than usual are good times for most people.



What should my numbers be?

Fasting Blood Sugar

.....
70-130 mg/dl

Blood Sugar
1-2 hours after eating

.....
less than 180 mg/dl

**Ask your doctor
what your blood
sugar number
should be.**

TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

- Use a blood glucose meter (**glucometer**) to learn what your blood sugar is at any time.
- Get an A1c blood sugar test done every 3 to 4 months.



Exercise

Regular exercise is a key part of your diabetes care plan. Exercise helps keep blood sugars in a healthy range.

Exercise may also:

- Lower stress and increase energy.
- Increase strength and range of motion.
- Help control blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Help insulin work better.

Choose an exercise plan you can enjoy. If you have not exercised in a while, start slow. For example, adding a 5-minute walk to your day may be a good start. Work up to at least 30 minutes 5 days a week for adults and 60 minutes daily for children and teens. Everyone should have 2-3 days of resistance or other muscle building exercise each week.



Ask your pharmacist or your doctor about where to get an I.D. bracelet or necklace.

Things to carry when you exercise:

1. Phone numbers of family and doctors in case of an emergency.
2. Cell phone or change to make a phone call.
3. Blood sugar meter.
4. Diabetes I.D. bracelet or necklace.
5. Emergency food to treat low blood sugar. This may include glucose tablets, hard candies, regular soft drinks or a tablespoon of sugar.

Exercise Safely

- Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids like water.
- Check your blood sugar before and after exercise.
- Wear good-fitting shoes. Check your feet before and after exercise.
- Include a warm-up and cool-down with each workout.
- Avoid intense outdoor workouts if it is very hot, humid, smoggy or cold.
- Follow your doctor's recommendations for physical activity.

* See your doctor before starting any exercise program.



Medicine Tips

Oral

- Know the name of your medicine, the amount you take and any possible side effects.
- Know when to take your medicine.
- Make a list of all your medicines and carry it with you.
- Call your doctor if you have any side effects.
- Never stop taking your medicine or change the dosage without asking your doctor.
- If you have any questions about your medicine, ask your pharmacist.
- Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about over the counter medication and diabetes.



Insulin

If you have Type 1 diabetes, you must take insulin to live. With Type 2 diabetes, you may take pills, insulin or both. Your doctor will teach you how to take insulin, but remember to:

- Check the expiration date on the insulin bottle or pen.
- Look at the insulin to make sure there are no solids or frosting in the bottle.
- Never freeze insulin or keep insulin in places above 80 degrees such as the car or in sunlight.
- Some insulin must be kept in the refrigerator. Ask your pharmacist or doctor about how to store your insulin. Make sure you follow the instructions on how to store your insulin.
- Gently roll the bottle between your palms to warm up cold insulin before injecting.
- Make sure you measure your insulin for the correct amount.
- Throw away needles properly. Check with your doctor, diabetes educator and/or trash company about the best way to throw away these items.

If you take 2 types of insulin, be sure to take the right dose of the right insulin at the right time!



Create a Healthy Plate

A healthy meal plan includes foods from all major food groups.

Bread, Cereal, Starchy Vegetables, Rice & Pasta (6 to 11 servings)

- 1 slice of bread
- 4-6 crackers
- ½ bun
- ½ cup starchy vegetable
- Less than ½ cup rice or pasta

Fruits (2 to 4 servings)

- 1 small piece of fresh fruit
- ½ cup canned fruit
- ½ banana
- 2 Tbsp dried fruit

Vegetables (3 to 5 servings)

- 1 cup raw vegetables
- ½ cup cooked vegetables

Milk & Yogurt (2 to 3 servings)

- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup yogurt

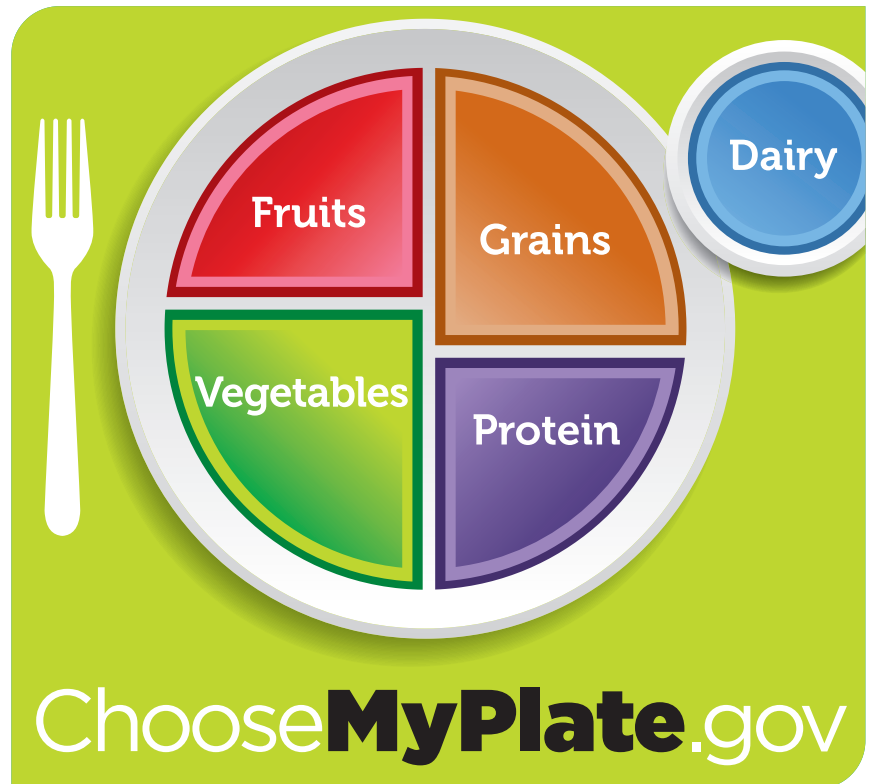
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans & Eggs (4 to 6 ounces)

One ounce is also

- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 egg

Fats, Oils & Sweets (use only a little bit)

- 1 tsp butter, margarine or oil
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise



Remember that some dairy like milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese also have carbohydrates if you are counting carbs.



Make Your Plate

Shape up your diet and fill your plate with a variety of healthy foods.

$\frac{1}{4}$ Carbohydrates

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with grains or starchy foods (carbohydrates) like rice, pasta, potatoes, corn or peas.

$\frac{1}{2}$ Vegetables

Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes or cauliflower.

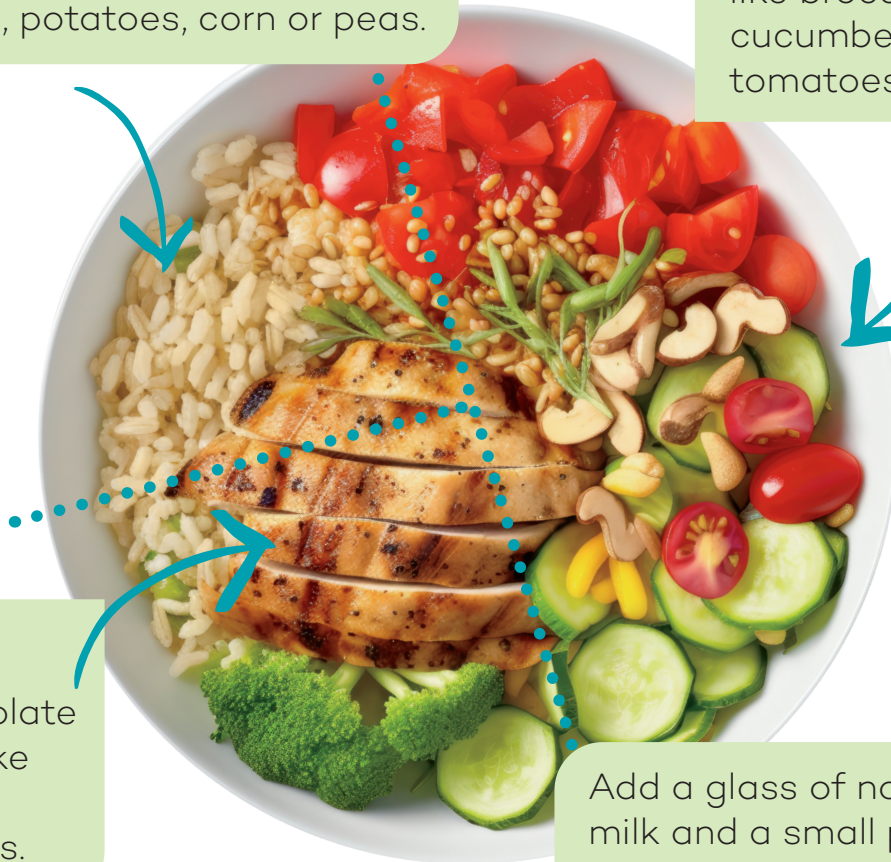
$\frac{1}{4}$ Protein

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with protein like meat, fish, poultry or eggs.

Add a glass of nonfat milk and a small piece of fruit. Milk is a good source of calcium and protein.

Healthier Options:

- Bake, broil or steam your foods rather than frying. If frying, use a spray like PAM® or oil instead of butter or margarine.
- Remove the skin from chicken and trim the extra fat.



Reading Food Labels

Learning to read labels is a key to healthy eating. Below are 4 of the most important parts of a food label:

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228mg)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 260 Calories from Fat 120			
% Daily Value			
Total Fat 13g			20%
Saturated Fat 5g			25%
Cholesterol 30mg			10%
Sodium 660mg			28%
Total Carbohydrates 31g			10%
Dietary Fiber 0g			0%
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g			
Vitamin A 4%			
Vitamin C 2%			
Calcium 15%			
Iron 4%			
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat. fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300g	300g
Sodium	Less than	2,400g	2,400g
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Serving Size: Use measuring spoons or cups to see what this amount looks like. The nutrition information listed is for 1 serving. If you eat 2 servings, multiply everything by 2.

Calories: This is key for weight loss.

Total Fat: A low-fat food is less than 3 grams of fat. Try to choose mostly low-fat foods.

Total Carbohydrates: You need some carbohydrates every day. But, too many can make your blood sugar too high. Total carbohydrates include grams of sugar. Watching total carbohydrates is more important than watching grams of sugar. If something is sugar-free, it does not mean it is carbohydrate-free. It is also good to look for foods high in dietary fiber. A dietitian or your doctor can tell you how many carbohydrates you need.



Nutrition

Eating right with diabetes does not mean you have to give up your favorite foods. Learning how to eat healthy is a key part of good diabetes care. To eat right with diabetes, you should:

- Eat your meals on time as planned.
- Choose baked, broiled or grilled foods instead of fried meats or vegetables.
- Limit extra fats like margarine or butter.
- Use low-fat milk, cheese and dressings.
- Fresh fruit is a better choice than fruit juice.
- Choose and buy healthy foods and low-fat snacks. Some examples are fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheese and crackers, light popcorn, yogurt and pretzels.
- Learn how different foods affect your blood sugar.
- Set up an appointment with a dietitian or your doctor to talk about your meal plan.

Remember!

Carbohydrates are starches and sugars in food. They have more effect on your blood sugar. Foods high in carbohydrates are breads, pastas, potatoes and sweets. You can eat these foods, but make sure you do not eat too much of them. Your blood sugar may get too high when you eat more carbohydrates than your body needs.



Sick Days



When you are sick, your blood sugar can get higher or lower than usual. Have a plan for your sick days before you get sick. Talk to your doctor about what you need to do.

Call your doctor if you:

- Have 2 blood sugars in a row over 300 mg/dl or several low blood sugars in a row.
- Have vomiting or diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- Cannot eat solid foods for more than 24 hours.
- Cannot keep liquids down.
- Do not feel better after 2 days.
- Lose 5 pounds or more when you are sick.
- Feel dizzy, confused or in pain.
- Are not sure what to do.

When you are sick:

- Never stop taking your diabetes medicine without talking to your doctor.
- Check your blood sugar at least every 4 hours.
- Drink water to avoid dehydration.
- If you cannot eat solid foods, eat or drink unsweetened fruit juice, clear broth, tea, JELL-O®, dry toast or crackers.
- Some continuous glucose monitor (CGM) sensors can be impacted by acetaminophen (Tylenol). If you use a CGM and take acetaminophen while sick, check blood sugar with finger sticks to be more accurate.



Sick Day Foods

Try your best to eat regular meals. If you can't, here are some examples of foods to keep your carbohydrate intake about the same:

- ½ cup pudding
- ½ cup regular gelatin
- 4 to 6 crackers
- ½ cup juice

ABC's of Diabetes

A

A1c

- Shows your blood sugar average over the last 3 to 4 months.
- Have this done at least twice each year or as ordered by your doctor.
- For good control, keep your A1c less than 7.

Aspirin

- Ask your doctor about taking aspirin.

B

Blood Pressure

- Have your blood pressure (BP) checked each time you visit your doctor.
- Keep your BP 140/80 or less.

C

Cholesterol

- Keep your BAD cholesterol (LDL) less than 100.
- Keep your GOOD cholesterol (HDL) higher than 50.

D

Diet

- Follow your diabetes food plan.
- Watch portion sizes.
- Make healthy food choices.
- Choose sugar-free, low-fat and low-salt foods.
- Check with your doctor before starting any diet.

Dental

- Visit your dentist twice a year.

E

Eye Care

- Have a DRE (Dilated Retinal Exam) each year.
- Even if your vision is normal, you could still have damage.

Exercise

- One of the best ways to control diabetes.
- Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

F

Foot Care

- Have your doctor check your feet at each visit.
- Check your feet daily for redness, cuts, sores or blisters.
- Have a yearly monofilament test to check for nerve damage.
- Always wear shoes, never go barefoot.

Flu

- Have a flu shot each year.
- Ask your doctor if you need a pneumonia shot or other vaccines to prevent illnesses..

K

Kidneys

- Have a yearly microalbumin test to check for damage.

S

Smoking, Vaping, and Dip

- Raises your risk of having diabetes problems.
- Try quitting and/or joining a quit smoking program or class.

Poorly Controlled Diabetes Can Cause:

A – Amputation

B – Blindness

C – Coronary (heart) disease / heart attacks and strokes

D – Dialysis

Contact Information

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Eye Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Dentist: _____

Phone: _____

Notes/Questions for My Doctor

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Resources

- **Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program**
<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dpqi/cdpb/Pages/diabetes.aspx> | 1-502-564-7996
- **American Diabetes Association**
www.diabetes.org | 1-800-DIABETES
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)**
www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes | 1-800-860-8747
- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**
www.eatright.org | 1-800-877-1600
- **Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation**
www.kylionseye.org | 1-800-232-5308
- **Kentucky Prescription Assistance Program (KPAP)**
<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dpqi/hcab/Pages/kpap.aspx> | 1-800-633-8100
- **Cabinet for Health and Family Services for Local Health Departments**
<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dafm/Pages/lhd.aspx> | 1-800-372-2973
- **American Heart Association**
<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes> | 1-800-242-8721
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
www.cdc.gov/diabetes | 1-800-232-4636
- **Kentucky Diabetes Network, Inc.**
<https://www.kydiabetes.net/> | 1-502- 564-7996 EXT. 4444

