

# Managing diabetes



Learning about diabetes may help you manage your condition. Keep reading to learn about things you can do that may help you control your diabetes.

## See your healthcare provider regularly

When you have diabetes, you should see your healthcare provider regularly—even if you are feeling well. Bring a record of your home blood sugar levels. Also, bring any questions you have about your treatment plan.

The buildup of glucose in the blood damages the lining of the blood vessels, causing narrowing of the vessels from plaque (fatty material), so blood doesn't move as freely.<sup>1</sup> Over time, elevated blood sugars can cause damage to the kidneys, eyes, heart, and more.

## At each appointment, your healthcare provider should check your:

- Blood sugar levels
- Feet (Foot exam)<sup>1</sup>
- Weight
- Blood pressure

You should also review your treatment plan with your healthcare provider.

## To reduce your risk of complications, you should have the following exams at least once a year:<sup>2</sup>

- **Retinal or dilated eye exam:** This helps find glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and other eye conditions.
- **HbA1c test:** This is a simple blood test to measure your blood sugar over a three-month period. This test is usually completed every 3-6 months, but your healthcare provider may check it more often if it is high.
- **Cholesterol profile test:** This measures cholesterol (including total cholesterol, HDL and LDL) and triglycerides in your blood.
- **Kidney test:** A urine test to check for a protein called albumin can find kidney disease or nephropathy. Your healthcare provider may also have you take a blood test to check your glomerular filtration rate, which tells how well your kidneys are filtering.
- **Dental exam:** It's important to have a dental exam every 6–12 months. Be sure to tell your dentist that you have diabetes.<sup>2</sup>
- **Flu shot.** It's important to get an annual flu shot. Talk to your healthcare provider to determine if you need a pneumonia shot as well.<sup>3</sup>

**When was the last time you saw your doctor and had bloodwork done?**

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**Do you know your A1C and blood sugar goals?**

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Other ways to help manage your diabetes

Be sure to monitor your blood sugar levels and take your medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

An important part of managing diabetes may be making some healthy lifestyle changes.

These changes may include:

-  Reaching and/or keeping a healthy body weight<sup>3</sup>
-  Eating a healthy diet with nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and fewer animal products, refined carbohydrates and sweets; avoid skipping meals, and limit salt and alcohol intake<sup>4</sup>
-  Staying active to help manage your blood sugar levels and body weight<sup>4</sup>
-  Managing stress and getting the right amount of sleep<sup>4</sup>
-  Avoiding or quitting smoking<sup>3</sup>
-  Your healthcare provider may also prescribe an oral medication and/or insulin. Be sure to take all your medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

Questions for your doctor

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**Need help reaching your goals?** Scan the QR code with a mobile phone or type in **HumanaNeighborhoodCenter.com** in a browser for additional resources and to schedule an appointment with a health educator.

Your diabetes checklist

Use this checklist provided by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases to track your tests.<sup>3</sup> Work with your doctor to determine your target ranges and record the date of your last exam and your results.

At every visit	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
Weight			
Blood pressure			
Foot exam			
Every 3–6 months	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
HbA1c			
At least once a year	Target goal	Date of last exam	Your results
Cholesterol profile			
Kidney test (blood- eGFR)			
Kidney test (urine-uACR)			
Complete foot exam			
Eye exam			
Dental exam			
Flu shot			

Sources

1. "Diabetes, Heart Disease, & Stroke", National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Last accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/preventing-problems/heart-disease-stroke>.
2. "Diabetes tests and checkups", National Library of Medicine, Last accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000082.htm>.
3. "4 Steps to Manage Your Diabetes for Life", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Last accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes/4-steps>.
4. "Diabetes management: How lifestyle, daily routine affect blood sugar", Mayo Clinic, Last accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-management/art-20047963>.

This is for informational purposes only and does not replace treatment or advice from a healthcare professional. If you have questions, please talk with your doctor. Talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program or making any changes to your diet.