

You've Just Been Diagnosed With Diabetes—Now What?



What is diabetes?

The blood in your body contains sugar, also called glucose, that is used for energy. Diabetes means that you have too much sugar in your blood. A main goal of treating diabetes is to lower your blood sugar to a normal level. By keeping blood sugar levels under control, you may help prevent or delay other health problems.

Diabetes can also increase your risk for other serious problems such as heart attack and stroke. You can reduce these risks by working to keep your blood pressure and cholesterol under control. Talk to your health care provider (HCP) about your blood pressure and cholesterol goals.

What is glucose?

Glucose is your body's fuel. Your body needs energy to get you through the day. That energy comes from glucose.

- Glucose in your blood comes from the food you eat. It is also made in your liver.
- Glucose travels through your blood to reach and feed every part of your body.

Your body normally helps control blood glucose by releasing insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas. Insulin helps move glucose from your blood into most of your cells to be used as energy. If you have diabetes, your body does not make or use insulin correctly.

Remember to talk to your HCP if you have any questions about diabetes or have any symptoms. Together, you can decide on what treatments are best for you. ■

It is important to work with your HCP to review all your treatment options and develop a plan that is best for you.

How can I manage my blood sugar?

Diet, exercise, and certain medications can help lower your blood sugar levels. Your HCP will help you make changes to reach your blood sugar goal.

There are several ways to know how well you are controlling your blood sugar. Home glucose testing will show your blood sugar levels at specific times during the day. This will help you understand how your blood sugar level responds to food, exercise, and medication. However, it is also important to see the “big picture” of your blood sugar control during the time between doctor visits. To get this information, your HCP will use a simple blood test known as A1C. The A1C test will be repeated at certain office visits.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends an A1C of <7% for many people.* Maintaining this level has been proven to reduce the risk of other medical problems associated with diabetes.

*The general goal of <7% appears reasonable for many adults with diabetes. Less stringent A1C goals may be appropriate for other patients, especially those with a history of hypoglycemia.

Making healthy changes successfully

Develop your healthy habits action plan

- Set specific, reachable goals for your weight and physical activity. Talk with your HCP to make sure the goals are realistic.
- Break a big goal into smaller steps—for instance, start out with a 5- to 10-minute walk 3 times a week; then walk longer and more frequently.
- Make lifestyle changes that you can live with for the rest of your life, such as portion control.
- Recognize triggers that prompt unhealthy behavior and plan how you will handle those situations in the future.
- Reward yourself for special milestones and progress toward healthy habits.
- Don't go it alone—let friends and family know about your plan to take better care of your diabetes. Talk with them when you need support.
- Expect obstacles and setbacks—then learn to deal with them and move on.
- Go easy on yourself—diabetes is challenging to live with. Give yourself credit for making an effort to achieve a healthier lifestyle.
- Quit smoking—smoking and diabetes are a bad combination. Smoking can also worsen other medical conditions that you may already have, like heart disease.



When you have diabetes, it is important to develop habits for healthy eating and physical activity that can help you keep your blood glucose levels within a healthy range.

Questions I have about diabetes

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