

# DIABETES: A NEW DIAGNOSIS

It may be difficult to learn you have diabetes. You probably have questions about what this means, or how it will affect your life. But you don't have to go through it alone! Your health care team is here to support you. They can answer your questions and give you all the tools you need to help you live a long, healthy life. But ultimately, it's up to *you* to take action!

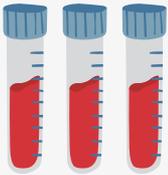


## What is Diabetes?

Your body takes sugar (**glucose**) from things you eat and uses it for energy. But in order for the body's cells to use glucose, they also need **insulin**. Diabetes is what happens when your body does not make enough insulin, or when the insulin does not work effectively.

If your body's cells can't use insulin, sugar will stay in your blood instead of being used for energy. High blood sugar is very damaging to the body, and can eventually lead to many other health problems.

## Understanding A1c



A1C, also called Hemoglobin A1C or HbA1c, is a blood test that measures the average level of sugar in your blood over the past 3 months.

This test does not replace your at-home blood sugar checks. Blood sugar levels go up and down throughout the day, and A1C is just an average.



For most people with diabetes, the goal is to have an A1c under 7%. This usually means your blood sugar levels have been well-controlled, which will help prevent many other health issues. Talk to your doctor about what your A1c should be!

# TWO MAIN TYPES OF DIABETES:

## Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 Diabetes is most common. It affects 90-95% of people with diabetes. In Type 2, your body's cells don't respond normally to insulin, the substance that helps absorb sugar from the blood. To make up for this **insulin resistance**, the body will make more and more insulin, until it eventually can't keep up. That's when blood sugar levels get very high.

This process is often slow, but will eventually lead to diabetes. Thankfully, there are many ways to manage type 2 diabetes, including diet, exercise, medication, and emotional support. Talk to your health care team about you can take control of your diabetes!

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## Type 1 Diabetes

With Type 1 Diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin. Again, without insulin, glucose will stay in the blood and can cause serious health problems.

If you have type 1 diabetes, you will need to check your blood sugar multiple times a day and take insulin shots (or wear an insulin pump) in order for your body to get the energy it needs.

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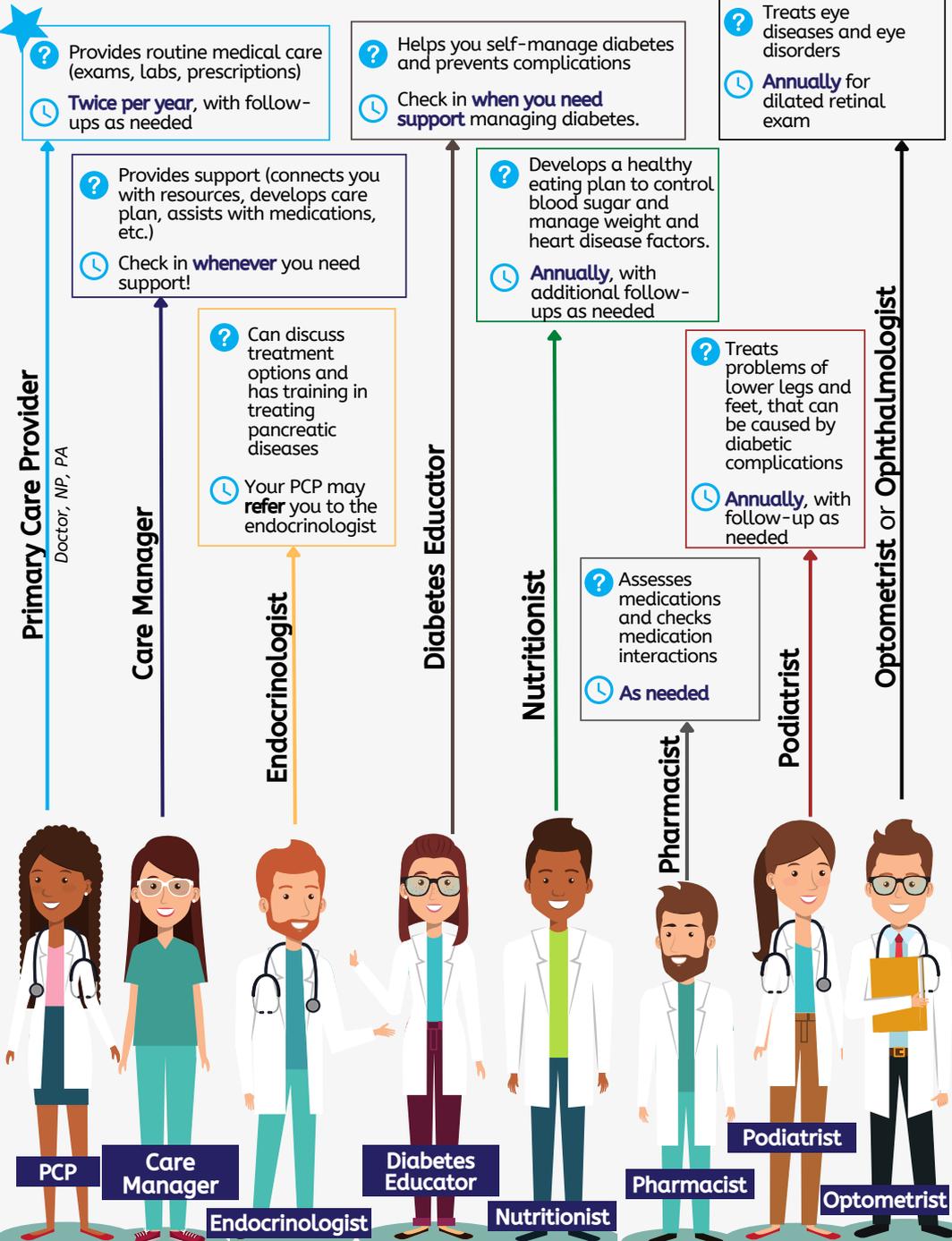


### References

- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>
- <https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/a1c>

# WHO'S WHO?

## Meet Your Care Team



Primary Care Provider

Doctor, NP, PA

Care Manager

Endocrinologist

Diabetes Educator

Nutritionist

Pharmacist

Podiatrist

Optometrist or Ophthalmologist

PCP

Care Manager

Endocrinologist

Diabetes Educator

Nutritionist

Pharmacist

Podiatrist

Optometrist

# KNOW THE SIGNS OF LOW BLOOD SUGAR

**Low blood sugar**, or **hypoglycemia**, occurs when your body and brain do not get enough sugar. Blood sugar levels go up and down throughout the day, but should always stay within a certain range.



If your level falls *below* that range (usually less than 70 mg/dL), you may start to feel symptoms. This can quickly become a medical emergency.

**Ask your doctor what a normal range of blood sugar levels is for you.**

Each person's reaction to low blood sugar is different. It's important to **learn what low blood sugar feels like to you**, so you can recognize it when it happens, treat it, and avoid a dangerous situation.

Not everyone will experience all of these, but some **common signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia include:**

## MILD

- Feeling shaky
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Irritability
- Sweating, chills, or clamminess
- Fast heartbeat
- Hunger or nausea

## MODERATE TO SEVERE

- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Confusion
- Feeling weak
- Feeling sleepy
- Clumsiness
- Difficulty seeing clearly
- Difficulty walking
- Passing out or having a seizure



When you are experiencing *mild* symptoms of low blood sugar:

- 1 Check your blood sugar with your meter.
- 2 If your blood sugar is low, drink at least ½ cup fruit juice or eat approximately 15 grams of glucose or sugar.  
- If your sugar is *very* low, eat 30 grams instead.
- 3 Check your blood sugar again after 10 minutes.
- 4 If your blood sugar is still low, take another 15 grams of glucose or other fast-acting sugar.

If you have symptoms of a **severe** low blood sugar, and your sense of confusion grows, or you feel that you may pass out, **call 911**. Talk your healthcare team about what other steps to take in that situation.

## References

- <https://dtc.ucsf.edu/living-with-diabetes/complications/hypoglycemia>
- <https://www.diabetes.org/healthy-living/medication-treatments/blood-glucose-testing-and-control/hypoglycemia>

# AVOIDING LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES

High blood sugar levels can damage your body and cause many additional health problems. This is why it's so important to take control of your diabetes. Managing blood sugar can be challenging at times, but improving your health is worth it!

Take a look at the boxes below to understand how to prevent or delay health complications from diabetes:

## Eat healthy and exercise

You may be able to manage your diabetes just with diet and exercise, or your doctor may prescribe medication.



Either way, it's important to still **eat healthy and be active!** This will help your body use insulin better, and can help with weight loss, which will lower your risk of other health conditions.



## Check your blood sugar

Keeping your blood sugar level close to target will help prevent or delay many diabetes-related health issues.



Ask your doctor about how to get a glucose meter and test strips. **Talk to them about how often you should check your sugar, and what your target levels should be.**

## Check your feet

About half of all people with diabetes have some kind of nerve damage. This can cause numbness, tingling, or pain – or you may have no symptoms. Nerve damage can also lower your ability to feel pain, heat, or cold. If you don't feel pain in your feet, you may not notice a cut, blister, or other problem. Small problems can become serious if not treated early. Consider these tips:

- **Wear shoes that fit well.**
- **Never go barefoot.** Always wear socks and shoes or slippers, even inside.
- **Trim your toenails** straight across and smooth any sharp edges with a nail file.

Have your podiatrist trim your nails if you have can't see or reach your feet

- **Check your feet every day** for cuts, redness, blisters, calluses, or other changes to your skin or nails. Use a mirror if you can't see the bottom of your feet, or ask a family member to help.
- **See your doctor** if you have a cut or blister that won't heal.
- **Get a complete foot check** from your doctor at least once a year.



## Manage stress and mental health

Believe it or not – stress, anxiety, and sleep can all affect your blood sugar level. Mental health can also impact many other aspects of daily life, such as how you think and feel, and how you make choices. If your mental health is not in a good place, it could make it harder to stick to your diabetes care plan.

**Always reach out to your health care team if you're struggling to manage stress or other emotions** – such as feeling sad, discouraged, or hopeless – or if think you might be depressed.



## Stop smoking

Smoking increases your risk for all kinds of health issues, from heart attacks to cancers. These risks are even bigger for people with diabetes who also smoke.

**Talk to your doctor for help with cutting back and stopping smoking.**



## Manage oral health



A healthy mouth is important for everyone, but high blood sugar can make it harder to keep your mouth healthy. Good oral health habits can help prevent pain and infections from tooth and gum disease.

If your gums are red, swollen, or bleed easily, see your dentist. These may be signs of gum disease. Other signs include dry mouth, loose teeth, or mouth pain.

Below are some more important tips:

- **Brush your teeth** at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- **Floss your teeth** at least once a day.
- **See your dentist regularly** (usually at least twice a year) and let them know if you have diabetes.
- **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking increases your risk of gum disease and can worsen your diabetes.



## Check your vision

Over time, diabetes can damage your eyes and cause vision loss. Managing your blood sugar and getting regular eye exams can help prevent vision problems and stop them from getting worse.



**Get a dilated eye exam** at least once a year to protect your eyesight.

## Manage blood pressure and cholesterol

People with diabetes are more likely to have high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, which raise your risk for heart disease.



It's important to **get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly**, and to follow your doctor's recommendations to treat any high blood pressure or high cholesterol.



AT LEAST  
**1X A YEAR**



**EYE DOCTOR**



**FOOT DOCTOR**



**DENTIST**

AT LEAST  
**2X A YEAR**



**DOCTOR**

# RESOURCES

Use the following resources below to support your diabetes care.

## Know Your Rights

- Be treated fairly at work, at school, and your daily life
- Understand how the American Diabetes Association (ADA) can help you
- Exercise your rights during COVID-19

## Tools

- [Diabetes Log Book](#)
- [Diabetes Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Foot Care Log](#)



## Diabetes Self-Management Education

- Find a [diabetes education program in your area](#) (ADA)
- Search for an accredited [diabetes education program in your area](#) (ADCES)

## Mobile Apps

- **Bezy T2D** (community conversation)
- **Fooducate** (calorie counter and diet tracker)
- **MySugr** (comprehensive diabetes management)
- **Diabetes:M** (diabetes logging app) - *Android only*
- **Diabetic Recipes** (diabetic-friendly recipe book) - *Android only*