

Managing Diabetes



Diabetes Signs & Symptoms

If you have any of these symptoms, see your healthcare provider. They could be signs of diabetes.

- Weight loss without effort
- Fatigue
- Extreme thirst
- Blurry vision
- Frequent urination
- Itchy dry skin
- A sore or infection that does not get better

A health coach can help you meet your healthy lifestyle goals

Call an IEBP Professional Health Coach at 888-818-2822

One American out of every twelve has some form of diabetes, usually Type 2. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the US, and can lead to other major medical problems. The effects of diabetes:

- Leading cause of blindness
- Doubles a person's risk of heart disease and stroke
- Most people with diabetes also have high blood pressure
- Leading cause of kidney failure, requiring dialysis or transplant
- Nerve problems that can lead to lack of feeling in the hands or feet, impotence, problems with digestion, and foot or leg amputations
- Studies show that people with diabetes are at greater risk for depression. It may be related to the amount of self care management required, nerve damage, high blood sugars, treatment goals, etc.
- Complications of pregnancy
- Dental problems
- People with diabetes are more likely to die when they get diseases like flu or pneumonia
- Medical expenses for people with diabetes are more than twice as high as those for people without diabetes

Besides the 36 million American adults who have diabetes, 35% of US adults have pre-diabetes (50% of adults aged 65 years or older). This is a condition that can lead to diabetes. A diagnosis of pre-diabetes gives people a chance to reduce their risk of developing diabetes.

Chronic conditions such as diabetes may have an adverse effect on your quality of life. Effectively managing your diabetes can lead to less disruption in your life.

Risk Factors

Some risk factors for diabetes cannot be changed:

- Family history. If you have one parent with diabetes, your own risk of diabetes is 50%.
- Age. As we age, risk of diabetes goes up.
- Ethnic group. African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanic/Latinos are at increased risk of diabetes in the US.

- Researchers believe that certain genes affect insulin function.
- Women who have had gestational diabetes (diabetes in pregnancy) have a 40-60% chance of developing type 2 diabetes within 5-10 years. Having had a baby weighing over 9 pounds is a risk factor for gestational diabetes.

The good news is that there are risk factors for diabetes that can be changed. Your healthcare provider can help you find ways to lose weight, exercise, sleep better, quit smoking and treat depression.

- Overweight people with pre-diabetes can reduce their risk with exercise and weight loss. Even losing 7% of your body weight helps reduce risk. For someone who weighs 200 lbs, 7% would be 14 lbs.
- Exercise should be for at least 30 minutes, at least 5 days a week. Not only does exercise decrease risk of diabetes, it also helps combat the risk factors below. Check with your doctor before beginning an exercise program.
- Lack of sleep is another risk factor for diabetes and for obesity. Do all you can to get 7-8 hours of sleep every night.
- Depression is a risk factor for diabetes.
- Smoking is a risk factor. Ask your healthcare provider about ways to quit.

Diagnostic Tests

- Fasting Plasma Glucose Test (FPG) measures blood glucose in a person who has not eaten anything for at least 8 hours.
- Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT) measures blood glucose after a person fasts at least 8 hours and 2 hours after the person drinks a glucose-containing beverage.
- Random Plasma Glucose Test, also called a casual plasma glucose test, measures blood glucose without regard to when the person being tested last ate.
- Your healthcare provider may refer you to an endocrinologist (a specialist who treats diabetes).

Disclaimer: This material is for informational purposes only and should not be used to replace professional medical advice. Always consult your physician before beginning a new treatment, diet or fitness program. This information should not be considered complete, nor should it be relied on in diagnosing or treating a medical condition.

Monitoring Your Health

Communication with your Healthcare Provider

- It is important to keep your healthcare provider updated with any changes or concerns with your health.
- Following your healthcare provider's plan of care optimizes your health outcome.
- If you are working with a professional healthcare coach, share their suggestions with your healthcare provider.

Ask your healthcare provider the following:

- What are my cholesterol, blood pressure, and A1C levels?
- What should they be?
- What can I do to reach my targets?
- What tests do I need and how often?
- How do I take my medication?
- How can I learn more about diabetes?

Engage in a lifestyle of healthy eating, exercise, and not smoking.

If you have diabetes, your children will be at risk as they get older.

Be a role model for taking good care of yourself, and your children will adopt healthy habits too, possibly decreasing their risk.

Helpful Websites

National Diabetes Education Program
www.yourdiabetesinfo.org

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
www.choosemyplate.gov

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

Diabetes Public Health Resource
www.cdc.gov/diabetes/consumer

American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org

People with diabetes require additional screening and monitoring throughout the year. If screening or monitoring doesn't occur, this is referred to as a gap in care. Monitoring includes:

Daily Blood Sugar Monitoring

- Check with your healthcare provider on his/her recommendation
- There is no one "best time" to monitor. Common recommendations are: fasting, before meal (s), before meal time and two hours after meal (s), before bedtime, when experiencing symptoms of low blood sugar.
- Aim to keep your blood sugar between 70-130 before meals and less than 180 two hours after meals



HbA1C

- Testing is usually 2 x year
- Check with your healthcare provider for your target
- The American Diabetes Association recommends an A1C of 7 or less
- This test measures the average blood sugar/glucose over the last 3 months

Blood Pressure

- Check with your healthcare provider about frequency for monitoring and target blood pressure
- High blood pressure can contribute to diabetic eye disease and kidney disease

Lipid Panel (total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, Triglycerides)

- At least yearly, more often if you are working on improving your levels
- High LDL (bad cholesterol) raises the risk for heart disease, which is the chief complication of diabetes

Kidney Function

- Creatinine - at least yearly
- Microalbumin - urine test performed at least yearly
- Serum creatinine - part of the comprehensive metabolic profile along with micro or macroalbumin urine test screen for kidney function. Nephropathy (kidney disease or damage) is a major complication of diabetes.

Eyes

- Yearly dilated eye retinal exam
- Diabetics are prone to develop retinopathy, glaucoma, and cataracts. Retinal eye exams can lead to early detection of these complications.

Feet & Skin

- Inspect your feet daily. Use a mirror or have someone else look at them, check between the toes.
- During office visits, if your healthcare provider does not look at them, ask them to
- Check skin daily for dry, red or sore spots
- Report skin changes to your healthcare provider.

Teeth & Mouth

- Do inspections of your mouth, gums, and teeth daily
- Dental visits every 6 months for cleanings and checkups
- Brush and floss teeth daily

Depression

- The stress of daily diabetes management and the complications associated with diabetes such as nerve damage, non healing wounds, vision problems, and kidney problems can sometimes make you feel that you are losing control and make you frustrated and sad.
- Diabetes can cause symptoms that look just like depression. High and low blood sugars can make you feel anxious, nervous, and/or tired. Feeling hungry and eating too much, and poor sleep at night can be caused by low blood sugar. Having to urinate frequently at night and then feeling tired the next day can be caused by high blood sugar.
- Depression can be a vicious cycle; it can block you from having good diabetes care. If you feel like you have no energy sometimes the task of checking your blood sugar is too much. Feeling anxious can make it hard to think straight and keep up on planning a good diet, or eating at all.
- If you are feeling sad, down or blue, or no longer enjoy things you liked to do, speak with your healthcare provider about this and seek professional treatment. Depression is a medical condition with very effective treatments available.

Hearing Screening

- Hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes
- Hearing loss can be gradual. Family or friends may notice it first.
- If you suspect hearing loss, ask your healthcare provider about seeing an Audiologist.

Nutrition

- Persons with diabetes are advised to eat a healthy diet. A Registered Dietitian will be able to help you choose a healthy, individualized eating plan.
- An eating plan that includes a variety of nutritious foods in moderate amounts is good for everyone.
- Aim for a healthy weight. If you are overweight, gradually lose weight. Losing 5-10% of your body weight can lower your blood sugar and blood pressure.
- Eat a consistent amount of carbohydrates at each meal and snack.
- Choose complex carbohydrates rather than refined (simple) carbohydrates.
- Refined carbohydrates are starches that have been processed to adjust texture and increase shelf life resulting in the stripping of essential nutrients and rapid absorption.
- Complex carbohydrates are those that have not been processed. Therefore, fiber, vitamins, and minerals remain intact. The extra fiber will help to slow down digestion resulting in feeling full longer, eating less over time, and slowing the absorption of glucose into the system.
- Complex carbohydrates include whole grain bread and whole grain pasta, brown rice, fruits, vegetables and legumes.
- Eat a healthy diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins (lean meats, poultry,) fish, beans (legumes), fat free or low fat dairy products, nuts, and seeds
- Choose to eat foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars.
- Decrease sweets and sugary beverages.
- Balance calorie intake with caloric needs.
- Try and eat at the same time every day.
- Menu suggestions can be found in the [Healthy Living Guide](#), [Healthy Eating Guide to Good Health](#) located at www.iebp.org.

Physical Activity

Physical activity helps manage your weight, tones your heart, circulation and muscles; keeps your body and your joints flexible; lowers your blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol; strengthens bones; boosts brain function; reduces stress; lifts your mood; and can help prevent and ease depression.

- Check with your healthcare provider for recommended guidelines before starting any physical activity .
- Stay as active as your health permits.
- Some activities that can keep you strong and increase your energy are walking, yoga, swimming, etc.
- Participate in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

Treatment & Prevention Lifestyle Changes

Tobacco

Tobacco and diabetes is a bad combination. Make a plan to quit tobacco.

Stress

Stress can raise your blood sugar. You cannot avoid stress; it is part of your daily life. However, developing effective ways to manage stress and learning to relax can help you manage your blood sugar. Here are some ways to manage stress:

- Learn to change the thoughts that are producing stress
- Reduce what is causing you stress. If you cannot resolve the stress alone, get professional help.
- Try to avoid situations that trigger stress for you (e.g., by practicing effective time management skills, setting priorities, pacing self, and taking time out for you).
- Practice relaxation exercises
- Exercise
- Develop a healthy sleep routine.
- Limiting sugar, caffeine, and alcohol can promote health and reduce stress.

Sleep

Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep nightly.

Medications

- Take your medications every day as prescribed by your healthcare provider
- Take at same time daily
- Three kinds of medicine can help you meet your glucose targets:
 1. Oral medication (pills)
 2. Insulin
 3. Injectable medications that are not insulin
- Ask your healthcare provider whether you need a medication that will protect your kidneys

Mental Health

Depression is very common with diabetes. If you suspect that you may be depressed, or you feel blue or sad often, speak with your healthcare provider.

Immunizations

Ask your healthcare provider which immunizations are appropriate for you, such as pneumonia, flu, etc.

Sick Day Plan

Speak with your healthcare provider regarding sick day management

Warning Signs

- Warning signs that you need medical attention include:
- Abnormally high blood sugar that doesn't respond to treatment
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Low blood sugar that doesn't improve with eating

Sick day plans often include...

- Checking blood sugar more often
- If you have type 1 diabetes, check for urine ketones
- Eat small frequent meals
- Aim for 50 grams of carbohydrates every three to four hours
- Limit or stop exercise
- If you take insulin, have a glucagon emergency kit available
- Drink lots of sugar free liquids
- If your blood sugar is less than 100, drink regular liquids
- Try and eat the same amount of simple carbohydrates
- Take your medications as directed by your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if...

- Blood sugar over 250 for more than 1 day
- Moderate to large urine ketones for several tests
- Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 4-6 hours