

Managing Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a long-term (chronic) condition. Managing your diabetes means making some changes that may be hard. Your healthcare provider, nurse, diabetes educator, and others can help you.

Managing type 2 diabetes means balancing your medicine with diet and activity. Managing your diabetes may also include checking your blood sugar. And, working with your healthcare provider to prevent complications.

Take your medicine as prescribed

You may take pills (oral medicine) or give yourself shots (usually insulin injections) for diabetes. Or you may use both. Taking your medicines or giving yourself insulin at the right times will help you control your blood sugar. Think about ways that will help you remember to take your medicines the right way every day. Ask your healthcare provider, nurse, or diabetes educator for ideas.

Although you may only take pills for your diabetes, this may change. Over time, most people with type 2 diabetes also use insulin.

Eat healthy

A healthy, well-planned diet helps control the amount of sugar in your blood. It also helps you stay at a healthy weight or lose weight, if you are overweight. Extra weight makes it harder to control diabetes.

Your healthcare provider, nurse, a dietitian, or diabetes educator will help you create a plan that works for you. You don't have to give up all the foods you like. Having meals and snacks with vegetables, fruits, lean meats, or other healthy proteins, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products will help control your blood sugar.

Be physically active

Being active helps lower your blood sugar. It does this by helping your body use insulin to turn food into energy. Activity also helps you manage your weight:

Ask your health care provider to work with you to create an activity program that's right for you. Your activity program is based on your age, general health, and types of activity you enjoy. You should start slowly, but aim for at least 150 minutes of exercise or activity. Don't let more than 2 days go by without being active.

Check your blood sugar

Checking your own blood sugar may be a regular part of your care. Or you may only check your blood sugar from time to time. Your healthcare provider will give you instructions about checking your blood sugar at home. Checking it tells you if your blood sugar is in your target range. Having your blood sugars within the target range means that you are managing your diabetes well.

If your blood sugar levels are too high or too low, your healthcare provider may suggest changes to your diet or activity level. He or she may also adjust your medicine.

Your healthcare provider may also tell you to check your blood sugar more often when you are sick. At certain times, for example, when you have a cold or the flu, you may need to check it more often.

Take care of yourself



When you have diabetes, you may be more likely to develop other health problems. They include foot, eye, heart, and kidney problems. By controlling your blood sugar, and taking good care of yourself, you can help prevent these problems. Your health care provider, nurse, diabetes educator, and others can assist you:

- **Checkups.** You should have regular checkups with your healthcare provider. At those visits, you will have a physical exam that includes checking your feet. Your healthcare provider will also check your blood pressure and weight.
- **Other exams.** You should also have complete eye, foot, and dental exams at least once every year.
- **Lab tests.** You will have blood and urine tests:
 - At least two times a year, your healthcare provider will check your hemoglobin A1C. This blood test shows how well you have been controlling your blood sugar over 2 to 3 months. The results help your healthcare provider manage your diabetes.
 - You will also have other lab tests. For example, to check for kidney problems and abnormal cholesterol levels.
- **Smoking.** If you smoke, you will need to quit. Smoking increases the chance that you will develop complications from diabetes. Ask your healthcare provider about ways to quit.
- **Vaccines.** Get a yearly flu shot. And, ask your healthcare provider about vaccines to prevent pneumonia, shingles, and hepatitis B.

Stress and depression

Most people have challenges throughout their lives. Living with diabetes, or any serious condition, can increase your stress and make you feel a lot of different emotions. In diabetes, feeling stressed or depressed can actually affect your blood sugar levels.

If you are having trouble dealing with diabetes, tell your healthcare provider. He or she can help or refer you to other healthcare providers or programs.

Support and resources

Know where you can get help. You can try the following:

- **Support.** Ask family and friends to support your efforts to take care of yourself. Or, look for a diabetes support group locally or on the internet. (Check the Connect with Others link on www.diabetes.org)
- **Counseling.** Talk with a social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, or other counselor.
- **Information.** Contact the American Diabetes Association at 800-342-2383 or www.diabetes.org