

# Tips to

# Help You Stay Healthy



**Taking action to manage your diabetes can help you feel good today and stay healthy in the future.**



**National Diabetes Education Program**

A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Work with your doctor and other health care team members to make a diabetes care plan that works for you.**

**Follow these four steps.**

### **Step 1:**

## **Learn About Diabetes**

Diabetes means that your blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Diabetes is serious because it can damage your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves. But you can learn how to manage it and prevent or delay health problems.

- Take a class and join a support group about living with diabetes. Check with your health care team, hospital, or area health clinic.
- Read about diabetes online. Go to [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org).
- Ask your diabetes health care team how you can learn more.

### **Step 2:**

## **Know Your Numbers**

Ask your doctor what diabetes target numbers are best for you. They may be different from the numbers below.

- A1C measures your average blood glucose level over the past 2 to 3 months. The A1C target for many people is below 7.
- LDL, or bad cholesterol, builds up and clogs your arteries. Ask what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. Your blood pressure goal should be below 140/80 unless your doctor helps you set a different goal.



James and his wife check online resources about diabetes.

### **Step 3:**

## **Manage Your Diabetes**

Your diabetes care plan should help you to:

- **Keep track of your diabetes numbers.**
- **Learn how and when to check your own blood glucose.**
  - See what makes your blood glucose go up or down.
  - Go over the test results with your health care team. Use them to manage your diabetes.
  - Ask how to prevent low blood glucose.
- **Be active for 30 to 60 minutes** on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a great way to be active.
- **Stop smoking.**  
Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).



Emma prepares a healthy meal for her family.

- **Eat healthy foods such as:**
  - fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats and poultry, dried peas or beans, lentils, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese
  - whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread and crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, and cereals
  - food prepared with little added fat, oil, salt, or sugar
  - smaller servings of meat, fish, and poultry
  - larger servings of fruits and vegetables.
- **Seek help if you feel down.** Talking with a counselor, friend, family member, support group, or a religious leader may help you feel better.
- **Take your medicines even when you feel good.** Ask if you need to take low-dose aspirin to prevent a heart attack or stroke.
- **Check your feet every day.** Call your health care team if a cut, sore, blister, or bruise on your feet or toes does not begin to go away after 2 days.

- **Brush your teeth and floss every day** to prevent problems with your mouth, teeth, or gums.
- **Tell your health care team if your eyesight changes.**

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## Step 4: Get Regular Care

- Contact your health care team if you have any questions or problems as you manage your diabetes, medicines, or supplies.
- Use “My Diabetes Care Record” on the last page to track your diabetes numbers and checkups with your doctor or health care team.
- Talk to your doctor if you plan to get pregnant.
- Ask what diabetes services are covered by Medicare and other insurance. To learn more about Medicare go to: [www.medicare.gov/navigation/manage-your-health/preventive-services/diabetes-screening.aspx](http://www.medicare.gov/navigation/manage-your-health/preventive-services/diabetes-screening.aspx).



Jane asks her doctor what target numbers are best for her.

## Take action to be healthy and control your diabetes for life.

Write down: *One or more reasons I have to manage my diabetes:*

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*One or more things I will work on over the next 3 months to carry out my diabetes care plan:*

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*People who can help me do these things:*

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Set goals you can reach. Break a big goal into small steps. Maybe you could start with a goal to walk half a mile each day. Then increase the distance each week or so until you are walking two or more miles each day. Give yourself a healthy reward for doing well.



HHS' NDEP is jointly sponsored by NIH and CDC with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

**www.YourDiabetesInfo.org**  
**or 1-888-693-NDEP**  
**(1-888-693-6337)**  
**TTY: 1-866-569-1162**

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## My Diabetes Care Record

	Date	Result	Date	Result	Date	Result
<b>Each visit</b>						
Blood pressure My target is:						
Foot check						
Review self-care plan						
Weight check My target is:						
<b>At least twice a year</b>						
A1C My target is:						
<b>Once a year</b>						
Cholesterol-LDL My target is:						
Complete foot exam						
Dental exam						
Eye exam (with drops in your eyes)						
Flu shot						
Kidney check						
<b>At least once</b>						
Pneumonia shot						
Hepatitis B shot						