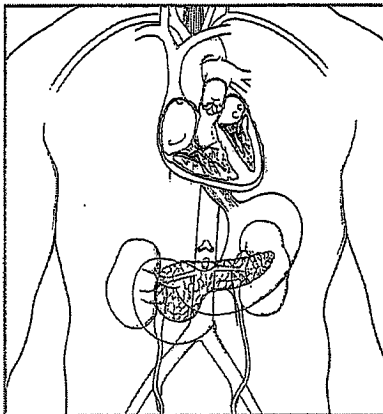


Managing Diabetes



Diabetes is when your blood sugar is too high.

Normally, blood sugar levels are controlled by insulin. Insulin helps your body use sugar, called glucose, for energy. If you have type 1 diabetes, your pancreas can no longer make insulin. If you have type 2 diabetes, either your pancreas can no longer make insulin or your body can't properly use the insulin being made. When this happens, sugar can't be used for energy, and it builds up in your blood.

Measuring Your Blood Sugar

A key part of managing diabetes is keeping your blood sugar under control. To do this, test it regularly (ask your doctor how often). Blood sugar levels are always changing, so it's a good idea to write them down so you can keep track of how and when they change.

The American Diabetes Association recommends these blood sugar levels:

Before a meal: 70–130 mg/dL

After a meal: less than 180 mg/dL

Keep the following in mind to help prevent highs and lows:

- Food raises blood sugar.
- Being sick can raise blood sugar.
- Exercise can raise or lower blood sugar.
- Medications can raise or lower blood sugar.
- Alcohol can raise or lower blood sugar.
- Stress can raise or lower blood sugar.

In order to monitor your blood sugar levels over time, your doctor will take a blood sample at least every six months to do an A1C test. This test shows your average blood sugar over the last three months.

Treating Diabetes

Learn as much as you can about your condition, and work with your doctor to develop a specific treatment plan that works for you. Your plan may include medication and insulin.

It's important to always take your diabetes medicine and insulin exactly as your doctor prescribes. Don't skip doses, and don't stop taking your medicine or insulin without talking to your doctor.

Living with Diabetes

A healthy diet and an exercise plan are key to managing your diabetes, controlling your weight and keeping you healthy. There isn't one "diabetes diet." What's important is to eat a wide variety of foods and smaller portion sizes. You can still eat the foods you enjoy—but in moderation. Consider these tips:

- Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Eat lean meats and fish.
- Drink water and diet sodas.
- Cook with liquid oils.

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Notes:

For more information, contact:

- **American Diabetes Association**
Website:
www.diabetes.org/espanol
Phone: 1-800-342-2383
- **National Diabetes Education Program**
Website:
www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/catalog.htm#PubsHispLatino
Phone: 1-301-496-3583
- **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**
Website:
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/index_sp.htm
Phone: 1-800-860-8747

Healthy Advice physicians may reproduce this handout for patient use.

- Limit your intake of fats and sweets.
- Eat something for breakfast every day.
- Pack your lunch for work.

Exercise is also an important part of a healthy lifestyle. It takes sugar out of your blood and uses it for energy. Regular exercise can lower blood sugar levels and reduce your risk of heart disease. You can start being active by doing simple things like walking with your family after dinner, playing tag with your children or grandchildren, or getting off the bus or subway one stop early and walking the rest of the way.

Prevent Complications

Having diabetes means you have to take special care of your overall health so you don't develop other conditions. Make a plan with your doctor to keep your body healthy and prevent complications. Include the following in your plan:

- **Don't smoke, and limit or avoid alcohol.**
- **Manage stress.**
- **Check your feet** for sores, blisters, in-grown toenails, or changes to skin color.
- **See your primary care doctor and dentist** for regular check-ups twice a year.
- **See your eye and foot doctors** once a year.
- **Get a flu shot and update your vaccinations** every year.
- **Lower high blood pressure.** Talk to your doctor about medication and lifestyle changes that can help.
- **Lower "bad" cholesterol (LDL) and raise "good" (HDL) cholesterol.** Talk to your doctor about medication and lifestyle changes that can help.

Remember:

- Take your medications and insulin exactly as prescribed.
- Monitor your blood sugar and try to prevent having a lot of highs and lows.
- Stick to your meal and exercise plans.
- Don't forget to take care of your overall health to prevent diabetes complications.

