Living Well with Diabetes

Goshen Health
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Living well with diabetes

Nearly 30 million adults and children live with diabetes in the United States. If you just found out you’re one of them, you may feel scared or overwhelmed. Even though there is currently no cure, you will discover there are steps you can take to manage diabetes. Millions of people with diabetes live full, healthy lives. This book will teach you the basic skills and information to live well with your diabetes.

To get started on managing your diabetes, we’ll cover:

- Monitoring your blood glucose and A1C
- Understanding hyperglycemia/hypoglycemia
- Eating healthier
- Taking medications (if prescribed)
- Being active
- Reducing your risk of diabetes complications
- Caring for your feet
- Solving problems
- Learning healthy coping skills
- Managing sick days
- Communicating with your healthcare provider
What is diabetes?

Diabetes means your blood glucose or sugar is too high. Glucose is used by your body for energy and comes from two places:

- Food (Digestive System)
- Your liver

Your body turns most of the food you eat into **GLUCOSE**. Glucose is carried by your blood throughout your body. When there is glucose in your blood, your pancreas releases insulin. Insulin is a hormone that acts like a **KEY** – opening cells and allowing glucose to move from your blood into your cells. Once glucose is in your cells, it can be used for energy now or stored by the body for use later.

**HOW BLOOD GLUCOSE IS USED FOR ENERGY**
Types of diabetes

**Type 1:** Although it can happen at any age, most people with type 1 diabetes are diagnosed under the age of 30. Type 1 diabetes is caused when the body’s immune system attacks the cells of the pancreas that make insulin. The treatment for type 1 diabetes includes meal planning, monitoring, physical activity and insulin.

**Type 2:** Ninety to 95 percent of all cases of diabetes are type 2. In this situation, the cells in your body resist the action of insulin. Insulin is needed to move glucose out of your blood and into your cells for energy. Treatment for type 2 diabetes includes meal planning, monitoring, physical activity and, for most, diabetes medications.

**Gestational Diabetes:** This type of diabetes develops during pregnancy. For most women, their blood glucose returns to normal after delivery. Women who have had gestational diabetes are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes later in life.

**TYPE 2 DIABETES-INSULIN RESISTANCE** *(Cells are resistant to insulin)*

Often, insulin resistance starts many years before it develops into type 2 diabetes. The more resistant your body is, the more insulin your pancreas must make. During the early years with insulin resistance, your pancreas can keep up with the increased need for insulin. Over time, your pancreas-producing ability slows down. As a result, your blood glucose will rise, resulting in type 2 diabetes.
Risk factors for type 2 diabetes

Among the risk factors for type 2 diabetes are some you can change or control and others you cannot:

- Family history of type 2 diabetes
- Being overweight
- Older than 45 years old
- African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Hispanic American/Latino ethnicity
- Inactivity
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Previous gestational diabetes or had a baby weighing 9 pounds or more at birth

Start thinking about the changes you can make to improve your health. Small changes can have big results. For example, losing even 10 to 15 pounds helps reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Warning signs of diabetes

Some people have signs or symptoms of diabetes, while others may not have any symptoms.

**COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 2 Diabetes</th>
<th>Type 1 Diabetes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Extreme thirst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blurry vision</td>
<td>Frequent urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry itchy skin</td>
<td>Increased hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuts or sores that heal slowly or not at all</td>
<td>Weight loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent infections</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbness or tingling of the hands or feet</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring your blood glucose

Testing your blood glucose (sugar) is an important part of your diabetes self-care. Daily monitoring will help you see how food, activity, stress or illness affects your blood glucose. It also provides your healthcare provider vital information on your treatment plan. While testing can be a challenge for some, monitoring on a regular basis is key to helping you better manage your diabetes.

Your target blood glucose should be individualized and based on the recommendations of your healthcare provider. If you have not discussed your target blood glucose range with your healthcare provider, you will want to do so. In the meantime, you can use the recommendations from the American Diabetes Association:

- Fasting or before meal 80-130
- Two hours after start of meal Less than 180

Talk with your healthcare provider about how often and when to check your blood glucose.

Typical times of the day are:

- When you first wake up
- Before a meal
- Two hours after the start of a meal
- At bedtime

Record your blood glucose results in a logbook or download them into your smart phone or computer.

Other factors affect your blood glucose so you may want to track them as well:

- Dose/time when you took your diabetes medication
- Food
- Activity
- Stress
- Illness

To be sure you’re getting the most accurate results when you test your blood glucose:

- Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on the care and use of your meter
- Make sure your skin is clean before checking your blood glucose
Monitoring your A1C

The A1C test shows the average value of your blood glucose over the last two to three months by measuring the amount of glucose attached to your red blood cells. Since red blood cells live for three months, the test shows the amount of glucose in your blood during that time. When you have too much glucose in your blood, your A1C number will be higher.

You and your healthcare provider will use the A1C test and your daily blood glucose tests to assess whether your diabetes treatment plan is working.

High A1C levels increase your risk for problems caused by diabetes. For each point decrease in your A1C, you can reduce your risk of long-term complications of diabetes by up to 40 percent.

You can lower your A1C by keeping your daily blood glucose in your target range.

The chart shows how your A1C equals your blood glucose numbers on your meter.

In general, your A1C will be checked at least twice a year. If you are not on target, more frequent testing may be needed.

Talk to your healthcare provider to find out what he or she recommends as your target A1C. Although the American Diabetes Association recommends a target A1C of 7 percent or less, A1C targets are often specific to an individual.

My target A1C goal is ___________
Hyperglycemia or high blood glucose

Although your blood glucose levels will vary throughout the day and night, one goal of your diabetes treatment plan is to keep your blood glucose on target as often as possible.

What can make your blood glucose too high?

- Eating too much food
- Less activity than usual
- Forgetting to take or taking too little diabetes medication
- Infection, fever or illness
- Changes in hormone levels such as during menstrual periods
- Stress
- Some medications such as steroids

Signs of high blood glucose

- Feeling thirsty
- Going to the bathroom more than usual – especially at night
- Feeling tired
- Blurry vision

What should you do if you suspect your blood glucose is too high?

- Check your blood glucose – report any pattern of high blood glucose to your healthcare provider
- Take diabetes medications as directed – if you cannot afford your medication, tell your healthcare provider
- Follow your meal and exercise plans
- Drink plenty of “no carbohydrate” drinks – water is the best choice

Hypoglycemia or low blood glucose

When your blood glucose is too low, your body is not receiving the fuel you need to stay healthy. Your brain may not be getting enough glucose to work properly. You will need to be able to recognize the signs of low blood sugar so you can treat it quickly.

What can cause your blood glucose to go too low?

- Delaying or missing a meal
- Eating too little
- Too much activity
- Taking too much diabetes medication
- Drinking alcohol without eating
Signs of low blood glucose
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed or shaky
- Sweaty or clammy skin
- Fast heart beat
- Hunger
- Confusion, headache or irritability
- Unable to be awakened

What should you do if you’re feeling the signs of low blood glucose?
- If possible, check your blood glucose
  - if less than 70 or if you cannot test, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate
  - if less than 50, eat or drink 30 grams of carbohydrate
- Wait 15 minutes and recheck
  - if still less than 70, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate
  - if greater than 70 and more than 1 hour before next meal, consider eating 1 ounce protein
    (example: one piece of string cheese)
- Wait another 15 minutes and recheck
  - if still less than 70, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate
  - if your glucose remains less than 70 after three treatments, consider calling for assistance or 911

Good choices for treating low blood glucose (emergency foods)
- 4 glucose tablets
- ½ cup or 4 ounces of fruit juice or soft drink (not diet)
- 1 cup or 8 ounces of skim or 1% milk
- 1 tablespoon of honey

Potentially life-saving tips
- Always wear identification stating that you have diabetes.
  That way, if you pass out, others will be able to help you
- Always carry emergency foods (listed above) with you
- Test your blood glucose more often
  - on days you exercise
  - when you are ill
  - any time you change your diabetes treatment plan
Healthy eating

You can still enjoy your favorite foods and eating out, even though you have diabetes. In fact, there is no strict diabetes diet. A healthy meal plan is about eating the right portions and combinations of foods, with the goal of reducing your risk of diabetes complications.

When to eat

- Eat at least three times a day
- Space meals four to six hours apart
- Try to eat at about the same time every day
- Try not to skip meals

What to eat

- A wide variety of foods
- Decrease portions of carbohydrate foods
- Limit foods high in saturated fat and sodium (salt)
- Eliminate high-sugar drinks

Understanding carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are foods that rapidly convert into glucose. That means, they can raise your blood glucose very quickly. Controlling the number of carbohydrates in each meal will help you maintain a healthier blood glucose. If you eat too many carbohydrates, your blood glucose will rise more than it should. However, eliminating all carbohydrates from your diet is not the answer. Your body needs carbohydrates for energy and normal healthy functioning.

Foods that are very high in carbohydrates

- Breads, crackers, cereals, pasta and rice
- Starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn and peas
- Beans and lentils
- Fruits and fruit juices
- Milk and yogurt
- Combination foods like casseroles and pizza
- Sweets like cookies, pies and candy
Plate method
The plate method is an easy way to help you plan your meals:

- Use a 9-inch plate
- Fill half with non-starchy vegetables
- Fill one-quarter with a lean meat or other protein
- Fill one-quarter with a bread, starch or whole-grain carbohydrate (15 grams carbohydrate)
- Add a small piece of fruit (15 grams carbohydrate)
- 8 ounces of skim or 1% milk (15 grams carbohydrate)

This meal plan has 3 choices or 45 grams of carbohydrate.

On average, food plans include three to four carbohydrate choices per meal. One carbohydrate choice equals 15 grams of carbohydrate. You may need more or less, depending on your personal goals. Include at least two carbohydrate choices at each meal to help assure good nutrition.

**GENERAL CARBOHYDRATE GUIDELINES FOR EACH MEAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To Lose Weight</th>
<th>To Maintain Weight</th>
<th>For the Very Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>2-3 choices (30 to 45 grams)</td>
<td>3-4 choices (45 to 60 grams)</td>
<td>4-5 choices (60 to 75 grams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>3-4 choices (45 to 60 grams)</td>
<td>4-5 choices (60 to 75 grams)</td>
<td>4-6 choices (60 to 90 grams)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food labels
Knowing how to understand nutrition labels can help you make better food choices. Food labels have a wealth of information that will be valuable to you.

In this example, the serving size is 1 cup, and has 31 grams of carbohydrate (equal to two carbohydrate choices). You’ll want to always look first at the total carbohydrates – because this is the number that raises your blood glucose. Sugar grams are included in the total carbohydrate number.

Serving sizes
When you first try to estimate the size of a serving, it may be difficult. Begin by measuring your drinks and foods, do this periodically to keep your estimates more accurate. You can use your hand as a guide:

- ½ cup is about the size and thickness of the palm of your hand
- 1 cup is about the size of your fist
- 1 bread serving is about the size of your open palm and half of your fingers
- 1 tablespoon is about the size of your thumb

HELPING HANDS

1/2 cup is about the size and thickness of your palm without the fingers (examples: peas, corn)
1 cup is about the size of your fist (examples: milk, soup, squash)
1 snack choice is a moderate handful (examples: chips, pretzels)
1 bread choice is about the size of your open palm and half your fingers (examples: chips, pretzels)
Sample meal plan

**Breakfast**
- 1 egg
- 1 slice whole wheat toast = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- 1 teaspoon butter made with olive oil spread
- 1 small orange = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- 1 – 6 ounce lite yogurt = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- Sugar-free beverage

**Lunch**
- 1 turkey wrap with lettuce, tomato & mustard = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- 1 cup side salad with 1 tablespoon of lite vinaigrette
- 8 baked potato chips = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- 1 small apple = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- Sugar-free beverage

**Dinner**
- 3 ounces grilled pork loin chop or chicken breast
- ½ cup mashed potatoes = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- ½ cup lite canned peaches = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- ½ cup green beans
- 2 small cookies = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- Sugar-free beverage

**Snack, if desired**
- 3 cups light popcorn = 1 carbohydrate choice or 15 grams of carbohydrate
- 1 string cheese
Controlling your carbohydrates is one aspect of healthy meal planning. You’ll also want to choose foods low in saturated fat and salt (sodium) to help manage your cholesterol and blood pressure. A diabetes educator or registered dietitian can help you with meal planning. Here are some suggestions:

### HEALTHY FOOD SUBSTITUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Try</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>White bread, white rice, french fries, macaroni and cheese, biscuits, rolls</td>
<td>Whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, brown rice, baked potato, beans and lentils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Fruit juices, fruit snacks, fruit canned in heavy syrup</td>
<td>Fresh fruit, frozen fruit, fruits canned in their own juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Whole milk, 2% milk, full-fat yogurt</td>
<td>Skim milk, 1% milk, light soy milk, fat-free and artificially sweetened yogurt and pudding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination Foods</td>
<td>Thick-crust supreme pizza, chili with beef, lasagna with sausage and cheese</td>
<td>Thin-crust veggie pizza, chili with turkey, lasagna with chicken and low-fat cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Starchy Vegetables</td>
<td>Canned vegetables, fried vegetables</td>
<td>Fresh vegetables, frozen vegetables, steamed/ baked vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats</td>
<td>Fried meats, sausage, bologna, bacon</td>
<td>Baked/grilled meats, turkey, chicken, fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats</td>
<td>Butter, mayonnaise, sour cream, bacon fat, creamy salad dressings</td>
<td>Olive oil-based products, canola oil, light sour cream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taking medications

Many people with diabetes may need to take medicine to keep their blood glucose on target. Each diabetes medication works in a different way. For example, your medicine

- May help your cells to be less insulin resistant
- May help your body release more insulin or
- May help your body use its own insulin more effectively

Frequently, multiple medications are needed.

Depending on your overall health, your healthcare provider may also prescribe medication to help manage your blood pressure or cholesterol. Taken along with your diabetes medications, these medications may be critical in helping delay or prevent complications of diabetes.

Make sure you understand

- The name of the medicine and the correct dosage
- When to take your medicine(s)
- What to do if you forget to take your medicine(s)
- Possible side effects
- How to take medication safely if you use alcohol

Helpful tips

- Take your medicines as prescribed
- Use a pill reminder box
- Set alarms on your phone
- Place sticky notes in places that you will notice them
- Set up automatic refills at your pharmacy
- Keep a current list of all medications with you
- Report any side effects or problems to your healthcare provider
- If you cannot afford your medication, tell your healthcare provider
Be active every day

Getting regular physical activity can help you live a healthier life. Being active helps:

- Lower your blood glucose levels
- Your body use insulin more effectively
- You lose weight and keep it off
- Lower your blood pressure
- Lower your blood fats, like cholesterol and triglycerides
- Lower your stress levels
- Increase your strength, endurance and flexibility

The American Diabetes Association recommends 150 minutes of exercise or activity each week. Speak with your healthcare provider on your personal goal for exercise. If you have not been active, start slowly with five to 10 minutes twice daily and work up to your goal.

If you are having difficulty finding the time or motivation to start exercising, keep in mind that three 10-minute sessions in a day is as good as one 30-minute session. Choose activities you enjoy, such as walking, biking, armchair exercise, or attending exercise classes. When you choose something you enjoy, you are more likely to make it a regular part of your life.

Try turning everyday activities into exercise opportunities. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk around while you talk on the telephone or march in place while watching TV.

More vigorous activities like brisk walking, dancing, swimming or riding a bicycle will help strengthen your heart and lungs. If you sit for long periods of time, make sure you get up and move every 90 minutes.

Increase your strength by using resistance bands, weightlifting (hand weights or machines) or exercising with light weights like canned goods or bottles of water at home. This helps build muscle, aids in weight loss and improves bone density.

Stretching before you exercise will improve your flexibility and help prevent injury.
When you are increasing your activity level, be sure to test your blood glucose more frequently, especially if you are on insulin or taking medication(s) to lower your blood glucose.

• Your blood glucose should be greater than 100 before you exercise
• Check your blood glucose after you exercise and record it. Take these readings to your healthcare provider to help decide if any changes are needed in your treatment plan.
• Be alert to possible low blood glucose after you exercise

Discuss your exercise plan with your healthcare provider or diabetes educator.

Helpful tips

• Choose comfortable clothing that fits properly, especially your shoes
• Wear identification that says you have diabetes
• Always drink more water or calorie-free beverages when you exercise, especially in warm weather. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to begin drinking.
• Carry an emergency food that contains carbohydrate (See the list of carbohydrates in the Healthy Eating chapter) in case your blood glucose drops low
• If you have numbness or loss of feeling in your feet or legs, you may want to choose exercise that puts less strain on your feet, such as biking or swimming
Reducing your risk of diabetes complications

It is natural for diabetes to change over time. These changes happen at different times for each person. Your body may become more resistant to the action of insulin. Over time, your pancreas may produce less insulin. Because of the possibility of these changes, your treatment plan may need to be adjusted. See your healthcare provider two to four times a year to determine your diabetes control.

Your healthcare provider will also check to be sure you are not developing any complications of diabetes. Catching these early can be critical to prevention and managing them.

**COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES**
• **Heart problems or stroke** – damage to the large blood vessels can lead to heart attack or stroke

• **Eye problems** – damage to the small blood vessels of the eye can lead to vision problems. High blood pressure can worsen eye disease.

• **Tooth and gum problems** – high blood glucose can increase your risk for gum disease

• **Feet** – damage to small and large blood vessels can slow circulation and damage the nerves in the legs and feet. Decreases in circulation and nerve response can lead to delays in wound healing and reduce walking stability. If wounds don’t heal, then amputation may result.

• **Kidneys** – damage to the blood vessels in the kidneys can cause a decrease in kidney function

• **Sexual function for both men and women** – nerve damage can interfere with the body’s sexual response and function

• **Nerve problems (neuropathy)** – can occur in all parts of the body

One of the most effective ways to delay or prevent these complications is to keep your blood glucose as close to your target goal as possible. If you have other health conditions, such as high blood pressure or abnormal cholesterol, your risk for developing diabetes complications is even higher. Working with your healthcare provider to manage all your health conditions is the best way to protect your health.

**Helpful tips**

• Don’t rely on your healthcare team to identify areas of concern. No one has more at stake than you do. Play an active role in reducing your risk.

• Learn about complications and how to delay or prevent them

• Talk with your healthcare provider about the tests you need. Maintain your own personal care record.

• Reduce your risk of complications by taking these precautions:
  – Don’t smoke
  – Schedule regular medical checkups
  – Follow your healthcare provider’s recommendations on other tests you should have
  – Keep your feet dry and clean. Look for redness or sores, and report these to your healthcare provider if you find them
  – Listen to your body and recognize when you aren’t feeling well, and call your healthcare provider
Foot care

Taking care of your feet every day can help prevent diabetes-related foot problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clean</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wash your feet daily with mild soap and warm water.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not soak your feet. Soaking can cause dry skin that cracks easily.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dry feet well, especially between the toes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trim nails straight across. Let your healthcare provider know if you are unable to trim your nails.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Check feet daily</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use your hands to feel your feet. A spot that feels hot to the touch can be a sign of infection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look at the top and bottom of each foot and between the toes. Check for any cuts, cracks, sores, redness or swelling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Call your healthcare provider if have a cut or scrape that is slow to heal, itches, feels warm, oozes fluid or smells bad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use a mirror or ask for help if you have difficulty checking your feet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protect</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not walk without protecting your feet with slippers or shoes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wear well-fitting socks and shoes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check your shoes before you put them on to be sure there are no objects inside.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When bathing, check the water temperature with your hand first.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treat</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply lotion to dry feet, but not between your toes as this can lead to fungal infections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not use sharp instruments, chemical treatments or abrasive materials on corns, calluses, or ingrown toenails. Let your healthcare provider help treat these.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clean and treat minor cuts or sores. Contact your healthcare provider if they are not healing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthcare provider foot check</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remove your shoes and socks at every diabetes visit to remind your healthcare provider to check your feet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Report foot problems immediately to your healthcare provider.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Problem solving

At one time or another, almost everyone encounters problems trying to control their diabetes. Challenges like low or high blood glucose will happen. In the long run, the more you understand about why a problem occurred, the better you’ll be able to prevent it from recurring.

Developing good problem-solving skills takes practice. By following a few key steps, you can learn how to work your way through a difficult situation. Remember, if your first solution doesn’t work, you can always try another idea. Be willing to accept that the problem may not be solvable right now. You can always revisit it later.

1. Don’t beat yourself up. Managing your diabetes doesn’t mean being perfect.
2. Think about your day
   a. Was your day stressful?
   b. Were you feeling ill?
   c. Was your routine different – woke up earlier, went to bed later or something else?
   d. Were you less active than usual?
   e. Were your meals larger than usual?
3. After reviewing your day, did you find a possible reason for your high blood glucose?
4. If so, what changes can you make now to help prevent a high blood glucose reading next time?

Keep in mind that keeping your blood glucose on target is the best way to manage your diabetes and delay or prevent complications. If at least half of your blood glucose readings are on target, there is a good chance that your A1C will be on target as well.
Coping with diabetes

Living with diabetes every day can be discouraging, stressful or even depressing. How you deal with these emotions can affect your health. You may have mixed feelings about diabetes: that’s natural.

Discover positive techniques for handling the difficult emotions that come with having diabetes. Healthy ways to cope include having enjoyable hobbies, joining a support group, exercising, journaling or practicing meditation. Having the support of family, friends and other people with diabetes (support group) can help you feel less alone in coping with diabetes.

Helpful tips

- Simplify and organize your daily life
- Plan ahead to help manage a busy schedule
- Try deep breathing exercises, meditation or prayer to help relax
- Exercise regularly
- Talk with a friend or family member
- Get adequate sleep and rest
- Be patient. Making changes in your lifestyle takes time and practice.
- Aim for consistency, not perfection

Sometimes emotional lows can be lengthy and negatively impact your overall health. This can be a sign of depression. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have experienced any of these symptoms on a long-term basis:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor appetite
- Not seeing the benefit of taking care of yourself
- Decreased interest or pleasure in your life
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling like diabetes has taken over your life
Managing sick days

Pay special attention to your diabetes when you are ill. Illness can cause your blood glucose to rise quickly. Therefore, you will need to test your blood glucose more often when you are ill. High blood glucose readings can be a sign of infection and can also cause an infection to get worse.

Helpful tips

• Take your regular diabetes medications at the usual time
• Check your blood glucose more often than usual
• Drink extra fluids such as water, broth or caffeine-free liquids
• If you cannot eat solid food, replace the carbohydrate in your meal plan with one of the following choices (each provides 15 grams of carbohydrate)
  – ½ cup regular gelatin
  – ½ cup regular soft drink
  – ½ cup hot cereal
  – 1 cup skim or 1% milk
  – ½ cup ice cream
  – ¼ cup sherbet
• Rest and avoid exercise
• Check your temperature one to two times daily
• Talk to your pharmacist before choosing over-the-counter medicines, as some can affect your blood glucose
• Call your healthcare provider if:
  – most of your blood glucose readings are over 200 for more than two days in a row
  – your blood glucose falls below 70 more than once during your illness
  – you are vomiting or have persistent diarrhea
Preparing for your healthcare provider visit

You are the key member of your healthcare team. Every day, you are the one making the decisions that impact your health. The good news is that you are not alone in your journey. Your healthcare provider is your partner in helping you manage your diabetes.

As the key member of your team, you’ll want to be sure you’re communicating clearly with your healthcare team. Be prepared to make the most of your appointments with the following tips:

- Take your logbook or a computer printout of your blood glucose results
- Write down a list of your questions
- Take a list of all your prescriptions including any over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements
- Remove your shoes and socks for your foot exam
- Discuss any physical, emotional or other concerns
- Make sure your healthcare provider knows when your last eye and dental exams were
- Write down any special instructions/care advice
- Follow through on your healthcare provider’s advice
- Ask if educational materials are available to help you understand

You can do this!

Changing how you live so you can manage your diabetes is a big job. But like most big efforts in our lives, it’s made up of the many small decisions you make each day. Most people can’t make the healthiest choice 100 percent of the time. But you can work toward improvement, so that you are choosing healthy options 60, then 70, then 80 percent of the time.

The changes in lifestyle that come with managing diabetes can make you healthier than you have ever been. Becoming more physically active, eating more balanced meals, stopping smoking, taking medication so your blood glucose is more regulated, finding positive ways to handle stress and getting more sleep are all positive lifestyle choices that are good for your body, making you stronger and more energetic.

You can do it – on your own or with the support of family, friends and a group of peers who understand your challenges. We’re here if you need us. We want to see you succeed.
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**ATTENTION:** If you speak Spanish, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1 (574) 364-1000 (TTY: 711 or 1 (800) 743-3333 to be connected with Relay Indiana).

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**ATENCIÓN:** Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1 (574) 364-1000 (TTY: 711 o llame al 1 (800) 743-3333 para comunicarse con Relay Indiana).