TAKING CHARGE OF

Diabetes
You can take charge of your diabetes.

There are four steps to help you take charge:

- **Step 1**: Learn about diabetes
- **Step 2**: Know your diabetes ABCs
- **Step 3**: Take care of your diabetes
- **Step 4**: Get routine care
Learn about diabetes.

Diabetes means that your blood sugar (blood glucose) is too high. There are two main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes**
  
  If you have type 1 diabetes, your body does not make insulin. Insulin helps your body use the sugar from the food you eat. If you have type 1 diabetes, you will need to take insulin every day.

- **Type 2 diabetes**
  
  If you have type 2 diabetes, your body may not make enough insulin. Or it may not use your own insulin very well. If you have type 2 diabetes, you may need to take pills or insulin. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes.

All people with diabetes, both type 1 and type 2, need to eat healthy foods, stay at a healthy weight and be active every day.

Taking good care of your diabetes will help you feel better. It will also help to prevent the health problems diabetes can cause, such as:

- Heart disease and stroke.
- Eye problems that can lead to blindness.
- Kidney problems that can cause kidney failure.
- Nerve problems that can cause your hands and feet to feel numb or tingle and that can lead to loss of a foot or leg.
- Gum disease and loss of teeth.
Step 2

Know your diabetes ABCs.

Control your A1c (blood sugar test), blood pressure and cholesterol. This will help to lower your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or other diabetes problems.

Reach your ABC goals

- Talk with your doctor about your ABC goals.
- Keep track of your ABC goals and results.
- Go to your doctor visits.
- Get your labs when they are due.
A is for A1c test. 5.5...6...6.5...7%...7.5...8...8.5

This is a blood test that tells you the level of your blood sugar over a 2- to 3-month time. This test is different from testing your blood sugar at home with a meter. Your A1c test will be done at your doctor's office or lab.

- The goal for most people is less than 7%.
- You should have an A1c test at least two times a year.

B is for blood pressure. 130/80 or below

If your blood pressure is high, it means that your heart is working harder. This puts you at higher risk for diabetes problems such as stroke, heart attack, and kidney and eye problems.

- The goal for most people with diabetes is a blood pressure of 130/80 or below.
- You should have your blood pressure checked each time you visit the doctor.

C is for cholesterol.

Cholesterol-LDL is the bad cholesterol that builds up in your blood vessels. It causes your blood vessels to get smaller and harder. This can increase your risk for a heart attack. Your cholesterol is tested by a blood test. It will be done at your doctor's office or lab.

- The cholesterol-LDL goal for people with diabetes is less than 100.
- You should have your cholesterol-LDL checked at least once a year.
Step 3

Take care of your diabetes.
You can help take care of your diabetes and prevent long-term problems.

Follow your food plan and eat healthy foods.

- Eat at least three meals and one or two snacks a day. Try to have your meals about the same time each day.

- Include lean meats, chicken, turkey, fish, low-fat milk and dairy products, fruits and vegetables. Choose whole grain breads, cereals and rice.
Eat and make foods with less salt, sugar and fat.

- Cut down on salt by not using the salt shaker when you make your food. Also choose fewer processed foods (such as canned foods, pickled foods, lunch meat and salted snack foods).
- Use sugar-free products to sweeten your foods and drinks.
- Avoid fried foods. Choose foods that are baked, grilled, broiled or steamed. Cut the fat off meats and remove the skin from chicken and turkey.

Be active 30 minutes, 5 days a week.*

- Choose something you enjoy — even walking. The more fun it is, the more likely you are to do it.

*If you do not have a fitness plan, talk to your doctor before you begin. You can work out a safe plan together.
Step 3 (cont.)

Stay at a healthy weight.

- Be active and eat the right amount of healthy foods. This can help you stay at a healthy weight.

Check your blood sugar as your doctor tells you.

- Test your blood sugar at home. You can do this with a test strip and meter. The reading that you get shows your blood sugar number.
- Ask your doctor about when to test and what your blood sugar goals should be. Make sure to write down your test results and bring them to your doctor’s visits.

See your dentist at least two times a year.

- Tell your dentist you have diabetes. Having diabetes puts you at risk for problems with your teeth and gums. Brush and floss your teeth.
Check your feet every day.

- Check your feet for cuts, blisters, red spots and swelling. Tell your doctor if you are having any problems with your feet or if you see sores that do not heal.

Take your medications the way your doctor tells you.

- If you take diabetes medications, know their names and how and when you should take them.
- Keep a list of all your medications to show your doctor at each visit.
Step 4

Get routine care.

See your doctor for your routine diabetes care and talk with your doctor if your feelings about diabetes prevent you from taking care of yourself.

At each visit you should get a:

- Blood pressure check.
- Weight check.
- Foot check.

Two times a year you will need to get an/a:

- A1c blood test (your doctor may have you tested more often).
- Dental exam to prevent tooth and gum problems (your dentist may recommend a different schedule).

Once a year you should get a:

- Cholesterol check.
- Eye exam (retinal) to check for eye problems and help prevent blindness.
- Urine test to check for kidney problems.
- Flu shot.
My Diabetes Care Record

Take this chart with you when you see the doctor. Use it to keep track of your test results. It will help you see how you are taking care of your diabetes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A1c (Blood Glucose) — at least two times a year</strong></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal: <strong>Less than 7%</strong></td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My goal (if different): _________</td>
<td>Result:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Blood Pressure — at each visit</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal: <strong>Less than 130/80</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My goal (if different): _________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cholesterol—LDL — at least once a year</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal: <strong>Total Cholesterol: less than 200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My goal (if different): _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: <strong>LDL Cholesterol: less than 100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My goal (if different): _________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Weight — each visit</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My goal: _________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Foot Check — each visit</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dental Exam — two times a year</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Urine Check for Kidneys — once a year</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Diabetes Eye Exam (Retinal) — once a year</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Flu Shot — once a year</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


For more information on diabetes

American Diabetes Association
1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
www.diabetes.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
www.cdc.gov/diabetes

National Diabetes Education Program
http://ndep.nih.gov/

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
1-800-860-8747
http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/

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