



Basic Diabetes Care

Staying Healthy With Diabetes



A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting at a table. The woman is on the left, leaning in and smiling warmly at the camera. The girl is on the right, also smiling and looking towards the camera. They are both holding silver spoons and are positioned around a large, clear glass bowl filled with fresh green leafy salad. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a dining area with a window and some furniture. The overall mood is bright and positive.

This booklet was created to give you basic information about diabetes. It is not meant to take the place of meeting with your doctor on a regular basis or any diabetes education classes.

Ask your doctor or your Health Plan about diabetes education classes and about making an appointment with a dietitian.

Recommendations are based on the American Diabetes Association's Standards of Care in Diabetes - 2025.

Basic Diabetes Care

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What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that affects how your blood sugar level is controlled in your body.

How Do I Know I Have Diabetes?

Blood Test	Without Diabetes	With Pre-diabetes (increased risk)	With Diabetes
Fasting Blood Sugar	Below 100 mg/dL	100-125 mg/dL	126 mg/dL or above
Random Blood Sugar	Below 140 mg/dL	140-199 mg/dL	200 mg/dL or above
A1c blood test score	Below 5.7 percent	5.7 to 6.4 percent	6.5 percent or above

There are **3** main types of diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes:

This kind of diabetes is more common in people under age twenty. It appears to develop because of having both a family history and another factor that triggers the diabetes to become active, such as a virus. The cells in the pancreas (organ that makes insulin) is damaged or killed. It is a lifelong condition. It needs to be treated with insulin for the rest of the person's life.

Type 2 Diabetes:

This kind of diabetes is the most common and is seen in teens and adults. It is developed mostly due to lifestyle (overweight, lack of exercise) and a family history. The body becomes unable to use the insulin it makes ("insulin resistant"). This type of diabetes can be improved with eating a healthy diet, exercise, and weight loss. It may be controlled with pills or insulin.

Gestational Diabetes:

When you have high blood sugar during any part of pregnancy.

You Are Not Alone...

At first, having diabetes can be hard to deal with and scary. The good news is, you are not alone. Ask your doctor about classes, support groups and other services for people with diabetes.

4 things you can do to stay healthy with diabetes:



1. Check your blood sugar as often as prescribed by your doctor.



2. Take your medicine, as prescribed.



3. Eat a healthy, well balanced diet.



4. Exercise regularly*

* Always talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Why Should I Control My Blood Sugar?

Taking Control Makes a Difference!

High blood sugar can lead to problems such as:

- Heart disease or damage
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Circulation problems
- Eye disease
- Kidney disease or damage

To help prevent these problems, you can:



Every day

- Follow your meal plan
- Exercise
- Find positive ways to deal with stress
- Brush and floss your teeth
- Take your medicine as prescribed
- Check your blood sugar as often as your doctor tells you to do so
- Check your feet
- Keep a log book of your blood sugar results and what you eat at meals

Every 6 months

- See your dentist

Every 3 to 4 months or more often if doctor recommends it

- Have an A1c test and urine test (for protein in the urine)

Every year

- Have your cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fat) checked
- Have a kidney test
- **Have a foot exam**
- Have a flu shot
- Have a dilated eye exam

At every office visit

- **Have your feet checked**
- Have your blood sugar checked
- Have your blood pressure, weight and Body Mass Index (BMI) checked
- Set your blood sugar goals
- Take your blood sugar meter and log book to your doctor visit

Other things to do

- Ask if you need any vaccines like a pneumonia, Hep B, HPV, TDAP, shingles, or Covid shot.
- If you smoke, vape or dip, ask about a program to help you quit.
- Ask about a Sick Day Plan. This is a guide for how to adjust your meals and diabetes medicines when you are sick (blood sugar can often go up when you are sick)



If you are overweight, losing 10 pounds can make a **big difference** in controlling your blood sugar.

Hyperglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

Hyperglycemia is the medical word for “high blood sugar.” It is when your blood sugar level is too high – above 130 or higher than the goal you set with your doctor.

What causes it:

Too much food with carbohydrates (sugar), too little insulin or diabetes medicine, illness, stress or less than normal activity.

How it starts:

Often starts slowly and may lead to a medical emergency if not treated.

Signs:



Always thirsty



Blurred vision



Hunger



Urinating a lot



Dry skin



Feeling sleepy

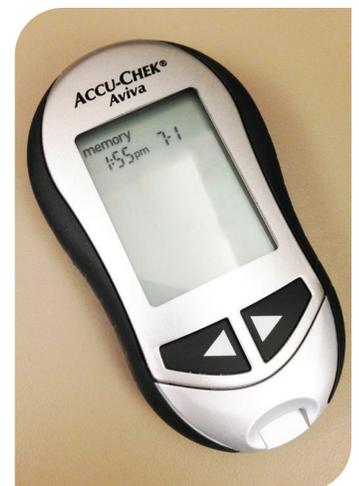


A sore that will not heal

Treating High Blood Sugar

What can you do?

- Check your blood sugar.
- If your blood sugar is higher than your goal for 3 days and you do not know why, **call your doctor!**
- Drink plenty of water
- Ask your doctor about Ketones, especially if you have Type 1 diabetes.
 - Ketones form when your body starts to use its own fat instead of sugar for energy. Ketones are a poison to your body.
 - Ketones in your blood can cause a serious condition called Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA).
 - You can check for ketones in your urine.
 - If you have been sick and your blood sugar is above 240 or even if you have not been sick and your blood sugar is above 300, you should check for Ketones.
 - Talk to your doctor about when to check for Ketones and what levels should cause concern.



Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Hypoglycemia is the medical word for “low blood sugar.” It is when your blood sugar level is too low – 70 or below.

What causes it:

Too little food, skipping a meal, too much insulin or diabetes medicine or an increase in activity when you have not eaten enough.

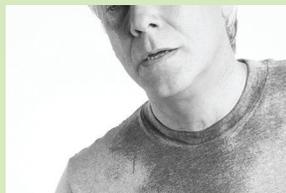
How it starts:

It comes on suddenly. You may pass out if it is not treated.

Signs:



Fast heartbeat



Sweating



Feeling Nervous



Hunger



Blurred vision



Headache



Feeling Irritable

Other Symptoms may also include: shaking, weakness, dizziness, confusion, clumsiness, sleepiness, and seizures.



Treating Low Blood Sugar

What can you do?

- Check your blood sugar right away. If you cannot check it, treat anyway.
- Treat by eating 3 to 4 glucose tablets or 2 to 5 hard candies that you can chew quickly (peppermints). Or, you can drink 4 ounces of fruit juice or ½ can of regular soda pop.
- Check your blood sugar again after 15 minutes. If it is still low, treat again. If symptoms continue, **call your doctor**.
- Within 15 minutes after your symptoms go away, eat a light snack (half a peanut butter sandwich and half a glass of milk).
- Always wear your diabetes I.D. bracelet or necklace.
- Always carry glucagon (high sugar medicine) if prescribed by your doctor.



Monitoring Your Blood Sugar

- Once you are diagnosed with diabetes or sometimes even with prediabetes, your doctor will prescribe a blood sugar machine called a glucometer to use. This machine is to test your blood sugar.
- Follow the instructions that come with your blood sugar meter. You will use the lancet (little needle) to poke your finger and draw blood. You will put a drop of blood on a test strip. Put the strip end with the blood into the meter to be read. That will tell you your blood sugar level.
- Store your strips in the original package and at room temperature.
- Do not use expired strips.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before checking your blood sugar.
- Use a new lancet each time you check your blood sugar.
- Be sure you have enough blood on your test strip.
- Throw away your lancets properly. Check with your doctor, diabetes educator, and/or trash company about the best way to throw away these items.
- Write down your blood sugar in a logbook. Bring your logbook to each doctor visit.
- Follow rules for highs and lows on pages 4 and 5.



What should my numbers be?

Fasting Blood Sugar

.....

70-130 mg/dl

Blood Sugar
1-2 hours after eating

.....

less than 180 mg/dl

Ask your doctor what your blood sugar number should be.

Your blood glucose meter may keep track of your test results. If it does, you can bring in the meter for the doctor to review your results. It may be helpful for you to write your results down so you can see how your results are trending - if too high or too low, call your doctor to discuss it, even if it is not time yet for your next planned visit.

How often should I check my blood sugar?

Ask your doctor how often you should check your blood sugar. Many people check their blood sugar several times a day.

What times should I check my blood sugar?

Ask your doctor what times are best for you. Before and 2 hours after meals, before and after exercise, and anytime you feel different than usual are good times for most people.

TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

- Use a blood glucose meter (**glucometer**) to learn what your blood sugar is at any time.
- Get an A1c blood sugar test done every 3 to 4 months.



Exercise

Regular exercise is a key part of your diabetes care plan. Exercise helps keep blood sugars in a healthy range.

Exercise may also:

- Lower stress and increase energy.
- Increase strength and range of motion.
- Help control blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Help insulin work better.

Choose an exercise plan you can enjoy. If you have not exercised in a while, start slow. For example, adding a 5-minute walk to your day may be a good start. Work up to at least 30 minutes 5 days a week for adults and 60 minutes daily for children and teens. Everyone should have 2-3 days of resistance or other muscle building exercise each week.



Ask your pharmacist or your doctor about where to get an I.D. bracelet or necklace. An ID bracelet lets first responders know you have diabetes in case you become too sick to speak.

Things to carry when you exercise:

1. Phone numbers of family and doctors in case of an emergency.
2. Cell phone or change to make a phone call.
3. Blood sugar meter.
4. Diabetes I.D. bracelet or necklace.
5. Emergency food to treat low blood sugar. This may include glucose tablets, hard candies, regular soft drinks or a tablespoon of sugar.

Exercise Safely

- Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids like water.
- Check your blood sugar before and after exercise.
- Wear good-fitting shoes. Check your feet before and after exercise.
- Include a warm-up and cool-down with each workout.
- Avoid intense outdoor workouts if it is very hot, humid, smoggy or cold.
- Follow your doctor's recommendations for physical activity.

See your doctor before starting any exercise program.



Medicine Tips

Oral

- Know the name of your medicine, the amount you take and any possible side effects.
- Know when to take your medicine.
- Make a list of all your medicines and carry it with you.
- Call your doctor if you have any side effects.
- Never stop taking your medicine or change the dosage without asking your doctor.
- If you have any questions about your medicine, ask your pharmacist.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about over the counter medication and diabetes.



Insulin

If you have Type 1 diabetes, you must take insulin to live. With Type 2 diabetes, you may take pills, insulin or both. Your doctor, nurse or diabetes educator will teach you how to take insulin, but remember to:

- Check the expiration date on the insulin bottle or pen.
- Look at the insulin to make sure there are no solids or frosting in the bottle.
- Never freeze insulin or keep insulin in places above 80 degrees such as the car or in sunlight.
- Some insulin must be kept in the refrigerator. Ask your pharmacist or doctor about how to store your insulin. Make sure you follow the instructions on how to store your insulin.
- Gently roll the bottle between your palms to warm up cold insulin before injecting.
- Make sure you measure your insulin for the correct amount.
- Throw away needles properly. Check with your doctor, diabetes educator and/or trash company about the best way to throw away these items.

If you take 2 types of insulin, be sure to take the right dose of the right insulin at the right time!



Create a Healthy Plate

Below are examples of one serving size from each food group

Bread, Cereal, Vegetables, Rice & Pasta (6 to 11 servings)

- 1 slice of bread
- 4-6 crackers
- 1 small tortilla (corn preferred)
- ½ cup starchy vegetable
- ½ cup rice or pasta
- ½ cup of cooked lentils or beans

Fruits (2 to 4 servings)

- 1 small fresh fruit (tennis ball size or smaller)
- ½ cup canned fruit
- ½ banana, mango or grapefruit
- 2 Tbsp dried fruit

Vegetables (3 to 5 servings)

- 1 cup leafy greens
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- 1 small potato
- ⅓ cup sweet potato

Milk & Yogurt (2 to 3 servings)

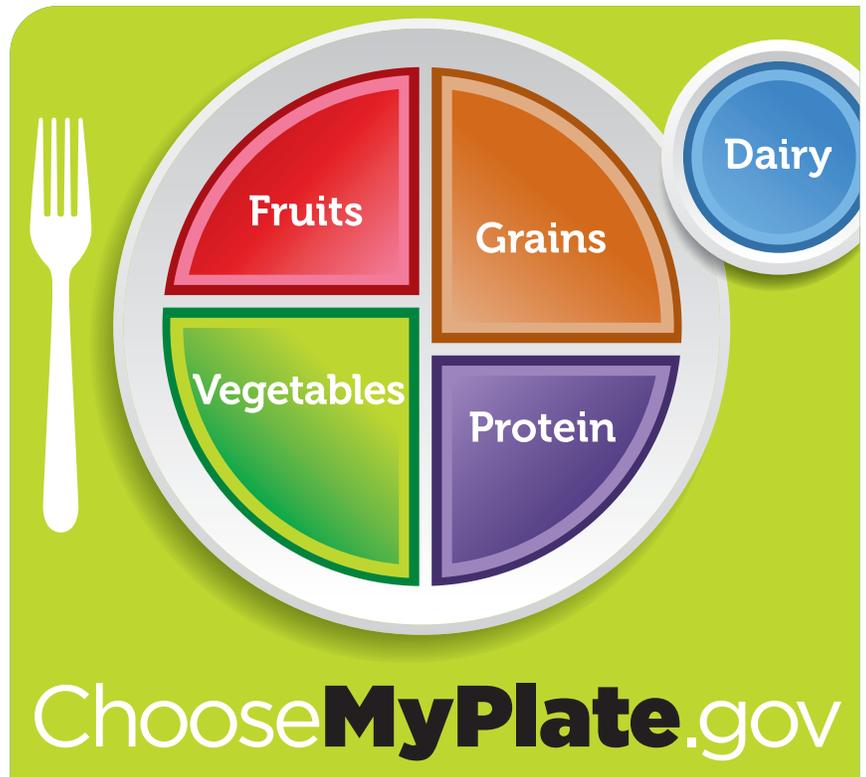
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup yogurt

Lean Meat, Poultry, Fish & Eggs (2 to 3 servings)

- 3 ounces meat, fish or poultry
- 3 ounces firm-extra firm tofu
- 1 egg

Fats and Oils (use only a little bit)

- 1 tsp butter, margarine or oil
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise



Remember that some dairy like milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese also have carbohydrates if you are counting carbs.



Make Your Plate

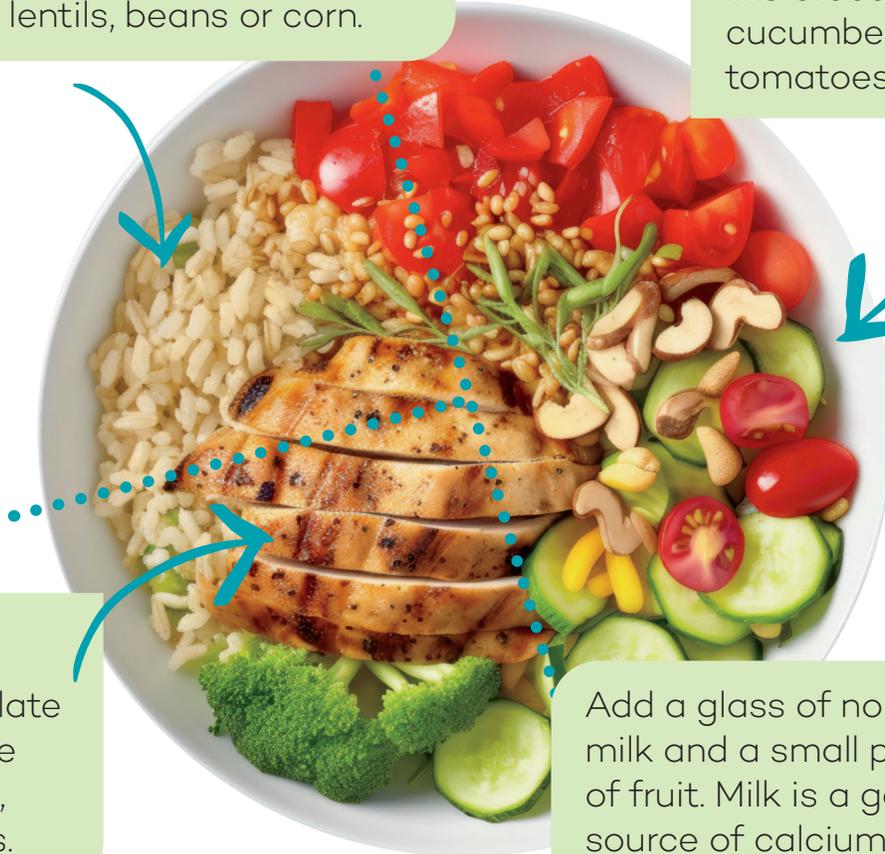
Shape up your diet and fill your plate with a variety of healthy foods.

1/4 Carbohydrates

Fill 1/4 of your plate with grains or starchy foods (carbohydrates) like rice, pasta, lentils, beans or corn.

1/2 Vegetables

Fill 1/2 of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes or cauliflower.



1/4 Protein

Fill 1/4 of your plate with protein like lean meat, fish, poultry or eggs.

Add a glass of nonfat milk and a small piece of fruit. Milk is a good source of calcium and protein.



Healthier Options:

- Bake, broil or steam your foods rather than frying. If frying, use a spray like PAM® or oil instead of butter or margarine.
- Remove the skin from chicken and trim the extra fat.



Call (833) 269-7830 to speak with a Dietitian about a healthy meal plan that is right for you.

Reading Food Labels

Learning to read labels is a key to healthy eating. Below are 4 of the most important parts of a food label:

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Serving Size: Use measuring spoons or cups to see what this amount looks like. The nutrition information listed is for 1 serving. If you eat 2 servings, multiply everything by 2.

Calories: This is key for weight loss.

Percent Daily Values: 5% or less of a nutrient is considered low and 20% or more of a nutrient is considered high.

Total Carbohydrates: You need some carbohydrates every day. But, too many can make your blood sugar too high. Total carbohydrates include grams of sugar. Watching total carbohydrates is more important than watching grams of sugar. If something is sugar-free, it does not mean it is carbohydrate-free. Look for foods high in dietary fiber. A dietitian or your doctor can tell you how many carbohydrates you need.



Nutrition

Eating right with diabetes does not mean you have to give up your favorite foods. Learning how to eat healthy is a key part of good diabetes care. To eat right with diabetes, you should:

- Eat your meals on time as planned.
- Choose baked, broiled or grilled foods instead of fried meats or vegetables.
- Limit extra fats like margarine or butter.
- Use low-fat milk, cheese and dressings.
- Fresh fruit is a better choice than fruit juice.
- Choose mostly plant based, whole foods and healthy animal protein that are low in saturated fats. Some examples are vegetables, fresh fruit, lentils/beans, nuts/seeds, fish and lean meats, and low fat dairy products.
- Learn how different foods affect your blood sugar.
- Set up an appointment with a dietitian or your doctor to talk about your meal plan.

Remember!

Carbohydrates are starches and sugars in food. They have more effect on your blood sugar. Foods high in carbohydrates are breads, pastas, potatoes and sweets. You can eat these foods, but make sure you do not eat too much of them. Your blood sugar may get too high when you eat more carbohydrates than your body needs.



Sick Days

When you are sick, your blood sugar can get higher or lower than usual. Have a plan for your sick days before you get sick. Talk to your doctor about what you need to do.

Call your doctor if you:

- Have 2 blood sugars in a row over 300 mg/dl or several low blood sugars in a row.
- Have vomiting or diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
- Cannot take your diabetes medicine (by mouth) and keep it down.
- Are vomiting and you take insulin.
- Cannot eat solid foods for more than 24 hours.
- Cannot keep liquids down.
- Do not feel better after 2 days.
- Lose 5 pounds or more when you are sick.
- Feel dizzy, confused or in pain.
- Are not sure what to do.

When you are sick:

- If you cannot eat or drink, and you do not have a Sick Day Plan, call your doctor to ask what to do.
- Do not stop taking your diabetes medications. Call your doctor and ask if your doses need to be changed.
- Choose sugar-free over the counter medicine such as cough syrup.
- Check your blood sugar at least every 4 hours also test your urine for ketones.
- Drink lots of water to avoid dehydration, especially if you have fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Eat your regular meals if you are able.
- If you cannot eat solid foods, eat at least 15 grams of carbs every hour while you are awake.

Examples of Carb Serving of 15 grams:

- 1 cup of soup
- 1/2 cup 100% juice
- 8 ounces of Gatorade
- 6 saltine crackers
- 1 slice of dry toast
- 1 popsicle
- 1/2 cup frozen yogurt
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal
- 4-6 Whole Grain Crackers



ABC's of Diabetes

A

A1c

- Shows your blood sugar average over the last 3 to 4 months.
- Have this done every 3 to 4 months until your A1c is under good control; then have it checked as ordered by your doctor.
- For good control, keep your A1c less than 7.

Aspirin

- Ask your doctor about taking aspirin.

B

Blood Pressure

- Have your blood pressure (BP) checked each time you visit your doctor.
- Keep your BP 140/80 or less.

C

Cholesterol

- Keep your BAD cholesterol (LDL) less than 100.
- Keep your GOOD cholesterol (HDL) higher than 50.

D

Diet

- Follow your diabetes food plan.
- Watch portion sizes.
- Make healthy food choices.
- Choose sugar-free, low-fat and low-salt foods.
- Check with your doctor before starting any special (e.g. weight loss) diet.

Dental

- Visit your dentist twice a year.

E

Eye Care

- Have a DRE (Dilated Retinal Exam) each year.
- Even if your vision is normal, you could still have eye damage.

Exercise

- One of the best ways to control diabetes.
- Do this every day!
- Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

F

Foot Care

- Have your doctor check your feet at each visit.
- Check your feet daily for redness, cuts, sores or blisters.
- Have a yearly monofilament test (special tool the doctor uses on your feet to see if you can still feel) to check for nerve damage.
- Always wear shoes, never go barefoot.

Flu

- Have a flu shot each year.
- Ask your doctor if you need a pneumonia shot or other vaccines to prevent illnesses.

K

Kidneys

- Have a yearly microalbumin test (protein in the urine) test to check for damage. If it is positive, your doctor will probably want to check this more often.

S

Smoking, Vaping, and Dip

- These raise your risk of having diabetes problems A LOT! Quit using nicotine in any form.
- **For help with quitting call Kick It CA at (800) 300-8086 or text "Quit Smoking" to 66819.**
- **Talk to your doctor about Nicotine Replacement Therapy. It is a covered benefit.**

Poorly Controlled Diabetes Can Cause:

- A** – Amputation
- B** – Blindness
- C** – Coronary (heart) disease / heart attacks and strokes
- D** – Dialysis

Diabetes Management Health Maintenance Schedule

Completing all health exams and tests can help people with diabetes live longer and healthier lives.

Tests	Monitors	Test Frequency	Recommendation
A1c	2 to 3 months blood sugar average	Every 3 to 4 months until good control	Less than 7 percent (or as advised by your doctor)
Blood pressure	Checks the force of blood flow through the blood vessels	Every doctor visit	If greater than 120/80 add lifestyle changes If above 140/90, add medication in addition to lifestyle changes
Cholesterol	Risk of heart disease	Yearly	Risk factors occur if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDL above 100 mg/dL • Triglycerides above 150 mg/dL • HDL less than 40 mg/dL in men and less than 50 mg/dL in women
Microalbumin (urine test)	Kidney function	Yearly	Less than 30 mg/dL
Eye Exam (dilated)	Eye disease	Yearly	Normal
Foot Exam	Foot problems	Every doctor visit	Normal
Flu shot		Yearly	
Pneumonia vaccine		At diagnosis and at age 65 years and older	
Other vaccines		Check with your doctor	

If you need help finding a doctor or a specialist, call Member Services. The number is on your member ID card.

Resources

- **American Diabetes Association**
diabetes.org | 1-800-DIABETES
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)**
niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes | 1-800-860-8747
- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**
eatright.org | 1-800-877-1600
- **American Heart Association**
heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes | 1-800-242-8721
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
cdc.gov/diabetes | 1-800-232-4636
- **National Diabetes Education Program**
ndep.nih.gov
- **Taking Control of Your Diabetes**
tcoyd.org | 1-800-998-2693

