

Staying Healthy

Managing Type 2 Diabetes



Do you know your ABCs?

Talk to your family health care provider about what targets are healthy for you, and how to achieve and maintain them over time.

A1C*

Recommended Targets:
7.0 per cent or below (for most people with diabetes)

My Goals _____

Blood Pressure

Recommended Targets:
Below 130/80 mm Hg

My Goals _____

Cholesterol

Recommended Targets:
LDL: 2.0 mmol/L or lower
Total cholesterol to HDL ratio: below 4

My Goals _____

* Measure of blood glucose levels over time. A1C targets for pregnant women and children 12 years of age and under are different.

What is type 2 diabetes?

To use the energy that comes from food, your body needs insulin. Type 2 diabetes is a condition in which your pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or your body does not properly use the insulin it makes. If you have type 2 diabetes, glucose builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy.

Get the support you need

You may have a hard time accepting that you or a family member has type 2 diabetes. It is not unusual to feel scared, shocked, overwhelmed, or even angry. Talk to others who have diabetes: A positive and realistic attitude can help you manage your condition.

In addition, your diabetes health care team can answer all of your questions about how to manage your diabetes. Your team might include a health care provider (your family doctor or a diabetes specialist) and diabetes educators (nurse and dietitian) as well as a:

- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Psychologist
- Foot care specialist
- Endocrinologist
- Eye care specialist

Remember: The most important member of your health care team is you.

The good news

You can live a long and healthy life by keeping your blood glucose levels (the amount of sugar in your blood) in the target range set by your family health care provider. There are many things you can do to stay healthy and manage your diabetes.

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Remember, lowering your blood glucose and blood pressure – even a little – will help you to become healthier and stay that way.



Things to work on!

Blood glucose

You and your health care team should set goals for your blood glucose levels. It is important to recognize that you may need to add pills and/or insulin to your lifestyle changes (meal planning and increased activity) to achieve your blood glucose targets. Ask about a blood glucose meter to help track your blood glucose levels. For more information, refer to the “Managing Blood Glucose Levels” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Managing Your Blood Glucose” video.

Physical activity

Physical activity helps control blood glucose levels, results in weight loss and helps reduce stress. Do at least 150 minutes (e.g., 30 minutes, five days a week) of moderate to vigorously intense aerobic exercise per week. You may need to start with as little as five to 10 minutes per day of brisk walking. In addition, resistance exercise (such as weight training) should be performed three times per week. If you are just getting started, check with your family health care provider first. For more information, refer to the “Physical Activity” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Managing Your Fitness” video.

Healthy eating

What, when and how much you eat all play an important role in regulating blood glucose levels. Follow a balanced meal plan. Ask your family health care provider to refer you to a registered dietitian to learn about healthy eating, and follow *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. For more information, refer to the “Healthy Eating: The Basics” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Managing Your Nutrition” video.

Weight management

Maintaining a healthy weight is especially important in managing type 2 diabetes. Doing so will help you control your blood glucose, blood pressure and blood fat levels. For more information, refer to the “Maintaining a Healthy Weight” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Managing Your Weight” video.

Medication

In some cases, type 2 diabetes can be managed with physical activity and healthy eating. However, oral medications and/or insulin are often prescribed – take them as directed by your family health care provider. For more information, refer to the “Using Insulin” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Medication” video.

Lifestyle management

Stress can impact your blood glucose levels. Learning to manage your day-to-day stress may help you maintain better control. For more information on dealing with stress, watch the “Managing Your Stress” video in this kit.

Quit smoking

Smoking and diabetes are a dangerous mix. If you are serious about quitting, your family health care provider or health care team can help. Keep trying; your health is worth it.

Things to be aware of

Blood pressure

High blood pressure can lead to eye disease, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. You may need to change your eating and exercise habits and/or take pills to keep your blood pressure below 130/80 mm Hg.

Cholesterol

High cholesterol and other fats in the blood can lead to heart disease and stroke. You may need to change your eating and exercise habits and/or take pills to keep your blood fats at healthy levels. For more information, refer to the “Managing Your Cholesterol” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Blood Pressure and Cholesterol” video.

Eye disease

You need to be seen by an eye care specialist who will dilate your pupils and check for signs of eye disease. Your regular family health care provider cannot do this special test in his or her office. Ask for a referral to an eye care specialist.



Foot care

Take off your shoes and socks at every visit (even if your family health care provider or health care team forget to ask you). Ingrown toenails, cuts and sores on the feet can lead to serious infections. Learn about proper foot care. For more information, refer to the “Foot Care” fact sheet in this kit and watch the “Managing Your Feet” video.

Depression and anxiety

These are common feelings in people with diabetes and can negatively affect your diabetes control. Speak to your family health care provider or health care team if you feel you might have depression or anxiety.

Kidney disease

The earlier you catch signs of kidney disease, the better. You must have your urine tested regularly for early signs of kidney disease. Your family health care provider may prescribe pills to delay more damage to your kidneys.

Nerve damage

Tell your family health care provider or health care team if your hands or feet ever feel numb or have “pins and needles.”

Problems with erection

Trouble getting and maintaining an erection is a very common problem in men with diabetes. Do not be shy about talking to your family health care provider or health care team.



Type 2 diabetes is a progressive, life-long condition; over time, it may be more difficult to keep your blood glucose levels in your target range. Your health care team can help by working with you to adjust your food plan, activity and medications.

Monitoring your blood glucose is important. Review your home glucose monitoring record with your family health care provider regularly. And make sure that your meter is providing accurate results by checking against the results of a blood test at the lab at least once a year.

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Keep on top of your diabetes management

Be an informed patient: Stay healthy by asking the right questions. Talk to your family health care provider about these important tests for basic diabetes care. You may need some tests more often than indicated. Target blood glucose and blood pressure levels may differ, depending on your health.

When?	What test?
At diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney test: urine test performed at the lab • Eye examination: through dilated pupils by an eye care specialist • Nerve damage test: using a 10-g monofilament or 128-Hz tuning fork • Cholesterol and other blood fat tests: a blood test
Approximately every 3 months * More often if treatment is initiated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1C blood test* (goal: 7.0 per cent or below for most people with diabetes) • Blood pressure (goal: below 130/80 mm Hg) • Review of home blood glucose monitoring record
Every 6 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney check • Foot exam at least once a year and right away for an ingrown toenail or any cut or sore that doesn't heal • Meter check against the results
Every 1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye examination by an eye specialist every 1 to 2 years (if eye disease is not present), more often if eye disease is present
Every 1 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cholesterol and other blood fats tests
Regularly/Periodically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about erection problems • Questions about depression and/or anxiety • Questions about healthy eating and physical activity