If you’ve just learned that you have diabetes or prediabetes, you probably have a lot of questions about what you can or can’t eat. Do you wonder if you can ever have your favorite food again? What happens when you are eating at a restaurant or a friend’s house? Do you have to change your whole diet just because you have diabetes?

The answer is NO. There is nothing that you can’t eat. You don’t have to give up your favorite foods or stop eating at restaurants.

But, it is important to know that everything you eat has an effect on your blood sugar. Learning to eat regular meals, controlling the amount you eat, and making healthy food choices can help you manage your diabetes better and prevent other health problems.

Some skills are more complex, but your diabetes educator or dietitian can help you learn about:

» Counting carbohydrates
» Reading food labels
» Measuring the amount of a serving
» Developing a practical meal plan
» Preventing high or low blood sugar
» Setting goals for healthy eating

Pick one or two of these skills and discuss them with your healthcare provider.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

There are only 3 main types of nutrients in food: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. A healthy meal will include all three types.

**TRUE OR FALSE:**

People with diabetes can’t have sugar.

**FALSE:** Sugar is just another carbohydrate and can fit into a meal plan. Sugary foods, however, do not have the same nutrition as grains or vegetables, and can often be high in fat and calories. It’s best to limit sugar-containing foods to small portions, and be sure to count the carbohydrates toward the total recommended in your meal plan.

**Word Wall**

**CARBOHYDRATE (AKA “CARBS”):**
One of the three main types of nutrients found in food. Bread, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables (especially starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, peas, dried beans), milk, and sweets are all carbs. Don’t forget that carbohydrates can be found in beverages, too.

**PORTION:**
How much of a food you eat

**MEAL PLAN:**
A guide for healthy eating developed with your healthcare provider

**HYPOGLYCEMIA:**
Low blood sugar

**HYPERGLYCEMIA:**
High blood sugar

**QUICK TIPS**

*Eat breakfast every day. Breakfast helps begin the calorie-burning process that provides you with energy. Include small snacks between meals as part of your daily intake to help keep your body going.*

*Space your meals throughout the day. Going too long without eating may result in excessive hunger, which can lead to overeating later on. Try to eat every 4 to 5 hours during waking hours.*
When I think about healthy eating, I feel: ____________________________, ____________________________, and _____________________________. (Pick 3 words to fill in the blanks)

What did you eat for dinner last night? _______________________________________________________________

Is there anything you could have done to make your meal healthier? _______________________________________

For you, what is the hardest part about healthy eating? ________________________________________________

What is the best part about healthy eating? ___________________________________________________________

REMEMBER THAT A HEALTHY MEAL PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Complex carbohydrates such as whole grain bread
- Fiber, which is found in beans, whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- Lean protein, such as chicken (without skin) or fish
- Lots of vegetables—especially the green, leafy ones
- A limited amount of heart-healthy fats, such as olive, peanut or canola oil, walnuts, almonds and flax seed

A good first step is to follow the "plate method" of meal planning, which includes a healthy balance of foods and controlled portions.

Visually divide your plate into 4 sections. For lunch or dinner, fill ½ the plate with non-starchy vegetables (such as: greens, green beans, broccoli, cabbage); ¼ should contain meat or other protein (fish, eggs, low-fat cheeses, cottage cheese, beans or legumes); ¼ contains starch (such as a potato or whole grain bread). On the side, include an 8 ounce glass of low fat milk or a small piece of fruit.

PLAN A HEALTHY DINNER THAT YOU WILL ENJOY IN THE SPACE BELOW.
Being active is not just about losing weight. It has many health benefits like lowering cholesterol, improving blood pressure, lowering stress and anxiety, and improving your mood. If you have diabetes, physical activity can also help keep your blood sugar levels closer to normal and help you keep your diabetes in control.

It can be difficult to find the time or the motivation to start an exercise program. Everyone's physical abilities and schedules are different; choose the best ways to fit physical activity into your daily life—whether it's walking to work, doing chair exercises or working out at the gym.

The important thing to remember is to choose activities that you enjoy doing and to set goals that are realistic.

Your healthcare provider can help you design an activity plan that works for you.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Breaking activity into three 10 minute sessions throughout the day is as good as one 30 minute session. This can help you fit exercise into your schedule.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

You are not working out hard enough if you can carry on a conversation.

**FALSE.** You should be able to talk when doing an activity. If you can’t, then your body is working too hard and you need to slow your pace.

**Word Wall**

**EXERCISE (OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY):**
Activities that get your body moving and help you stay healthy

**CARDIO:**
Exercise that raises your heart rate

**RESISTANCE TRAINING:**
Activities that help you build muscle and strength

**Quick Tips**

Any amount of physical activity is better than none at all. Making physical activity part of your daily lifestyle burns calories even if it’s not part of a structured plan.

Even if you are inactive and out of shape now, you can improve your health by moving just a little more. Take small steps to add more movement into your daily lifestyle. In time, you will find that you are stronger and will be able to move even more!

Check your glucose before and after physical activity to learn how your body responds.

Supported by an educational grant from Eli Lilly and Company.
ASK YOURSELF
What’s your all-time favorite activity that gets you moving? _________________________________________________
What stops you from doing it? (Circle as many as you want)
  » Not enough time
  » Too out of shape
  » Too tired
  » Not motivated
  » Can’t afford it
  » My _______________ hurts too much
What can you do to get started doing this activity or working up to it? _________________________________________

Pick some other activities that you enjoy doing:
__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________

MAKE A FITT PLAN FOR YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
  » Frequency—How often will you do this activity? Work up to 5 or more days a week.
  » Intensity—How hard should you be working? Remember, you should be able to talk, but not sing during an activity.
  » Time—How long will you do it? Be realistic. Start with 5 or 10 minutes, and work up to 30 minutes.
  » Type of Activity—What will you be doing? Do something you enjoy!

GET CREATIVE!
  » Partner with a friend to find creative ways to be more physically active.
  » Take your dog for a walk or play fetch at the park.
  » Call a friend to go dancing or put on your favorite song and make the living room your personal dance floor.
  » Find a gym buddy to motivate you to stay active.
  » Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
  » If you eat lunch with a co-worker, ask him/her to join you for a short walk after you eat.
Checking your blood sugar levels regularly gives you vital information about your diabetes control. Monitoring helps you know when your blood sugar levels are on target. It helps you make food and activity adjustments so that your body can perform at its best. It takes some time and experience to figure out how your daily activities and actions affect your blood sugar.

Your diabetes educator can help you learn:

- How to use a blood sugar (glucose) meter.
- When to check your blood sugar and what the numbers mean.
- What to do when your numbers are out of your target range.
- How to record your blood sugar results.

Checking your blood sugar is an important part of diabetes self-care, but monitoring your overall health includes a lot of other things too, especially when you have diabetes. You and your healthcare team will also need to monitor your:

- Long-term blood sugar control—A1C, eAG
- Cardiovascular health—blood pressure, weight, cholesterol levels
- Kidney health—urine and blood testing
- Eye health—dilated eye exams
- Foot health—foot exams and sensory testing

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The American Diabetes Association recommends an A1C target below 7% (an eAG of 154 mg/dl); the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends less than 6.5% (an eAG of 140 mg/dl).

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

If you want to see how your body responds to your meal, wait 1-2 hours after eating to check your blood sugar levels.

**TRUE.** Your blood sugar rises in response to what you’ve eaten. It takes about 2 hours for the numbers to reflect the full rise.

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**Word Wall**

**METER:** A small device that is used to check blood sugar levels

**LANCET:** A small needle used to get a blood sample

**A1C:** A test that measures your average blood sugar levels during the past 2-3 months

**ESTIMATED AVERAGE GLUCOSE (eAG):** The number of the A1C test changed into mg/dl like the blood sugar levels shown on your glucose meter

**Quick Tips**

Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly before checking your blood sugar. Substances on your skin (like dirt, food, or lotion) can cause inaccurate results.

When traveling, keep your supplies with you. Advise security personnel that you are carrying diabetes supplies.

If you have trouble affording the test strips, call the toll-free number on the back of your meter to see if coupons are available, or ask your diabetes educator about other resources.

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Remember, the way you feel does not always reflect what your blood sugar is doing. The only way you know is to check your numbers!

» Check your blood sugar levels as directed to share with your doctor or diabetes educator.
» Follow a schedule, keep a record of your daily levels, and use the numbers to make decisions about your diabetes care.
» Check your blood sugar levels if you think you’re getting sick.

When you check your blood sugar levels:

» Keep a record and bring it to every health appointment.
» Try to identify patterns when your blood sugar goes up or down.

If your numbers aren’t at goal, don’t get down. This is useful information that can help your healthcare provider match your treatment to your needs.

If you develop a regular schedule and follow it closely, you’ll learn how your blood sugar levels affect how you feel. You’ll start to recognize unhealthy blood sugar trends before they get out of control.

What is your typical day like, in terms of eating, activity, and diabetes medication? (Record it in the space below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Eating</th>
<th>Medication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>10:00 p.m.</td>
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</table>
There are several types of medications that are often recommended for people with diabetes. Insulin, pills that lower your blood sugar, aspirin, blood pressure medication, cholesterol-lowering medication, or a number of others may work together to help you lower your blood sugar levels, reduce your risk of complications and help you feel better.

Your medications come with specific instructions for use—and they can affect your body differently depending on when and how you take them. It may take a while to figure out which medicines work best with your body. So it’s important for you to pay attention to how you feel and how your body reacts to each new medicine or treatment. It’s up to you to tell your pharmacist, doctor, nurse practitioner, or diabetes educator if you’ve noticed any side effects.

It’s important to know the names, doses and instructions for the medications you’re taking, as well as the reasons they are recommended for you.

**REMEMBER TO:**

» Ask your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist why this medication was recommended for you.

» Ask your diabetes educator to help you fit your medication routine into your daily schedule. Be sure to bring all medications or labels with you when you go to health appointments.

» Ask a family member to go with you to an appointment and take notes about any medication instructions. Or, ask someone to remind you to take your medications if you have difficulty remembering to take them.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Some over-the-counter products, supplements, or natural remedies can interfere with the effectiveness of your prescribed medicines. Tell your diabetes educator about ANY supplements you are taking so that he/she can make the best recommendations for your care.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

When you inject insulin, you need to rotate your injection sites.

TRUE. If you inject insulin in the same spot every time, your tissue can become damaged and won’t absorb insulin as well. Be sure to rotate your injection sites between the fatter parts of your upper arm, outer thighs, buttocks, or abdomen.
ACTIVITIES

How do you feel about having to take insulin or other medicines?
____________________________________________________________________________________________

What is the hardest part about taking your medications?
____________________________________________________________________________________________

Name one of your medications.

How much are you supposed to take?

When are you supposed to take it and how often?

Why do you have to take this medication?

What are some of the possible side effects?

What are you supposed to do if you experience side effects?

Anything else you need to know?

What do you do if you forget to take this medication?

*Repeat this exercise for every medication. Be sure to ask your pharmacist or diabetes educator if you do not know the answers.
What do you do when you have a problem like low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)? Do you know what caused it? How can you help reduce the risk of it happening in the future?

Everyone encounters problems with their diabetes control; you can’t plan for every situation you may face. However, there are some problem-solving skills that can help you prepare for the unexpected—and make a plan for dealing with similar problems in the future.

Some of the most important problem-solving skills for diabetes self-care are learning how to recognize and react to high and low blood sugar levels and learning how to manage on days when you are sick.

Your diabetes educator can help you develop the skills to identify situations that could upset your diabetes control.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Skipping meals and snacks, taking too much diabetes medication, engaging in physical activity and drinking too much alcohol can all cause you to experience low blood sugar problems.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

Nobody has perfect diabetes management.

**TRUE.** You are not perfect—no one is. There WILL be problems and challenges. The important thing is to learn from each situation—what caused your blood sugar to go above or below target, and what you can do to improve your diabetes self-care.

**HYPOGLYCEMIA:**
Low blood sugar

**HYPERGLYCEMIA:**
High blood sugar

**GOAL SETTING:**
Choosing a specific task or activity that you want to achieve and making a plan to get there

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**Word Wall**

**HYPOGLYCEMIA:**
Low blood sugar

**HYPERGLYCEMIA:**
High blood sugar

**GOAL SETTING:**
Choosing a specific task or activity that you want to achieve and making a plan to get there

**Quick Tips**

- Do not go more than 5 hours without eating during your waking hours.
- Limit your alcohol consumption. Learn how it interacts with your medications and how it affects your blood sugar.
- When you do drink alcoholic beverages, don’t drink on an empty stomach.
- If you do have a problem with your diabetes control, don’t beat yourself up over it—solve it and learn from it! Talk to your healthcare provider—they can help you come up with solutions.

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Think about how the following situations may affect you—and about what steps you could take to maintain proper control of your diabetes in similar situations.

You get the flu and notice that your blood sugar levels are higher than normal. What do you do?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

While on vacation, you don’t have easy access to a gym or time for exercise. How will you handle this?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

You have a hard time finding healthy food choices within your family’s cultural or taste preferences. What steps can you take?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Is there something you’ve been struggling with in your diabetes care? What is it?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Why do you think this is a problem? When does it occur?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Name two things you can do to fix it.
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

What can you do to prevent it from happening in the future?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

American Association of Diabetes Educators
Having diabetes puts you at a higher risk for developing other health problems. However, if you understand the risks, you can take steps now to lower your chance of diabetes-related complications.

Talk to your diabetes educator and healthcare provider about potential health issues such as kidney damage, nerve damage and vision loss. They can explain why complications happen and how they can be avoided. But don’t rely on your healthcare team to identify areas of concern—you need to play an active role in reducing your risk. Make an effort to learn about complications and consistently track your overall health. You can reduce your risks for several complications by taking these precautions:

» Don’t smoke.
» Schedule regular medical checkups and medical tests.
» See an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) at least once a year.
» Keep your feet dry and clean. Look out for redness or sores, and report these to your healthcare team as soon as you find them. If you have trouble seeing the bottom of your feet, ask a family member or friend to help you.
» Be sensitive to your body—recognize when you aren’t feeling well, and contact your care team if you need help identifying the problem.

DID YOU KNOW?
Lowering your cholesterol can decrease your risk for stroke, heart attack or other circulation problems.

TRUE OR FALSE?
Controlling your diabetes can help reduce your risk for heart disease.

TRUE. If your blood sugar or blood pressure levels are too high for too long, your blood vessels can become sticky. This makes it easier for blood clots to form…which can lead to a heart attack or stroke.
ACTIVITIES

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO STAY HEALTHY AND PREVENT OTHER PROBLEMS.

FOLLOW YOUR HEALTHY EATING PLAN.
Are you proud of the way you ate today? ____________________________________________

KEEP ACTIVE
What is your favorite outdoor activity? _____________________________________________

TAKE MEDICATIONS
Did you take your meds today? ____________________________________________________

MONITOR YOUR BLOOD SUGAR
What was your blood sugar number last time you checked? _____________________________

CHECK YOUR FEET
Any pain or sores on your feet? ____________________________________________________

BRUSH AND FLOSS YOUR TEETH
When was your last dentist visit? ____________________________________________________

CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE
Do you know what your blood pressure is? ____________________________________________

DON’T SMOKE
What can help you quit? __________________________________________________________

GET AN EYE EXAM (WHICH INCLUDES DILATING YOUR EYES) AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR
Have you had an eye exam this year? ________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDED TESTS</th>
<th>TARGET LEVELS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1C</td>
<td>Less than 7%</td>
<td>Every 3 to 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
<td>Less than 130/80</td>
<td>Every visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDL (good cholesterol)</td>
<td>Over 40 (for men); Over 50 (for women)</td>
<td>At least every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDL (bad cholesterol)</td>
<td>Less than 100 (less than 70 if you have heart disease)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>Less than 150</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eye Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Every visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot Exam (visual)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Every visit to your healthcare provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot Exam (with sensory testing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Every year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diabetes can affect you physically and emotionally. Living with it every day can make you feel discouraged, stressed or even depressed. It is natural to have mixed feelings about your diabetes management and experience highs and lows. The important thing is to recognize these emotions as normal. Take steps to reduce the negative impact they could have on your self-care.

The way you deal with your emotional lows is called “coping.” There are lots of ways to cope with the upsets in your life—and not all of them are good for your health (smoking, overeating, not finding time for activity, or avoiding people and social situations).

However, there are healthy coping methods that you can use to get you through tough times (faith-based activities, exercise, meditation, enjoyable hobbies, joining a support group).

Having a support network is key to healthy coping. Be sure to develop and nurture partnerships in your personal life with your spouse, loved ones and friends. Go to group educational sessions where you can meet and relate to other people going through the same experiences. Build healthy relationships—and remember that you’re not alone.

Sometimes, emotional lows can be lengthy and have a more serious impact on your life, health, and relationships. This can be a sign of depression. Tell your diabetes educator if you:

» Don’t have interest or find pleasure in your activities.
» Avoid discussing your diabetes with family and friends.
» Sleep most of the day.
» Don’t see the benefit in taking care of yourself.
» Feel like diabetes is conquering you.
» Feel like you can’t take care of yourself.

Physical activity can influence your mood. If you are sad, anxious, stressed or upset, go for a walk, stand up and stretch, or take a bicycle ride. Exercise actually increases the chemicals in your brain that help make you feel good!

Did You Know?

Physical activity can influence your mood. If you are sad, anxious, stressed or upset, go for a walk, stand up and stretch, or take a bicycle ride. Exercise actually increases the chemicals in your brain that help make you feel good!

TRUE OR FALSE?

Nobody wants to hear about your problems. When you are feeling down, you should keep it to yourself.

FALSE. You need to talk about your emotions with friends, family, or your healthcare provider. Sometimes just talking about a problem will help you solve it…and loved ones can help you gain perspective.

Recognize the power of positive thinking. When you are feeling down, think about your successes and feel good about the progress you’ve made toward a goal—even if it’s just a little bit.

Find time to do something pleasurable every day.
Name 3 emotions that you feel when you think about your diabetes.

Who can you talk to when you feel this way?

Name 3 activities that will help you work through this emotion and feel better.

What might prevent you from doing these activities?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

How can you overcome these obstacles?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________