



# My Diabetes

Workbook/Action Plan



BlueCross  
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# What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body is unable to properly utilize food (carbohydrates) for energy, resulting in too much sugar in the blood. There isn't a cure yet for diabetes, but with lifestyle changes and proper management, people with diabetes can live long, healthy lives and continue doing activities they enjoy.

## HOW DO I MANAGE MY DIABETES?

Eating a healthy diet, staying physically active, and monitoring your condition are important steps to managing diabetes. However, not everyone manages diabetes the same way so it's important to work closely with your provider. Getting started can feel overwhelming – this booklet is designed to help equip you with knowledge, tools, and resources that will support you in your unique health journey.

## SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Work with your healthcare team to create an individualized plan that works for YOU and YOUR diabetes. Appropriate nutrition and lifestyle changes, along with medication and regular screenings and monitoring, can help you better manage your diabetes and may reduce the risk of developing diabetes-related complications.

## LET'S BEGIN YOUR ACTION PLAN!

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## Type 1 diabetes

is an autoimmune disease in which the pancreas is no longer able to make insulin.

## Type 2 diabetes

(insulin resistance) occurs when the body's cells are unable to properly react to insulin.

**Insulin** is a hormone produced by the pancreas that lowers blood sugar by acting like a key that allows blood sugar to enter the cells of the body and be used for energy.

After eating, carbohydrates are broken down into sugars in the body called **blood sugar** or **blood glucose (BG)**. If the body can't produce enough insulin or is resistant to insulin, blood sugar levels will continue to rise and can lead to diabetes-related health complications over time.

## SECTION 1

# Monitoring

Monitoring your blood sugar levels is an important part of managing your diabetes. Your numbers enable you and your healthcare team to determine how your diet, medication, and physical activity impact your blood sugar levels, and to adjust your overall care plan as needed.

## HEMOGLOBIN (A1C OR HBA1C)

This blood test estimates your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends an A1C of less than 7.0% for most adults, but discuss your individual A1C goal with your provider as they might suggest a different goal for you.

**Have your A1C checked by your provider every 3-6 months,** or as recommended by your provider.

- High A1C readings over time can increase your risk of developing diabetes-related complications. An A1C greater than or equal to 8.0% may signify unmanaged diabetes.
- If your A1C is high despite following your recommended treatment plan, talk with your provider about considering changes to your plan.

**My A1C goal is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My A1C scores:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## CHECKING YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

Checking your blood sugar levels regularly can help you and your healthcare team make adjustments to your treatment plan that can improve health outcomes.

- Work with your provider or pharmacist to get a blood glucose (BG) meter and supplies to measure your own blood glucose levels
- Check your blood sugar levels as recommended by your provider to reach or maintain your goals

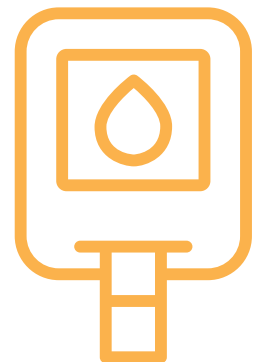
If you take insulin before meals, follow **“PIE”** – **P**oke, **I**nject, **E**at

**ADA recommends blood sugar target range  
BEFORE meals (fasting) = 80-130 mg/dL**

My blood sugar target range BEFORE meals is: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADA recommends blood sugar target 1-2 hours  
AFTER meals (postprandial) = less than 180 mg/dL**

My blood sugar target range 1-2 hours AFTER meals is: \_\_\_\_\_



## LOW BLOOD SUGAR (HYPOGLYCEMIA)

A blood sugar level below 70 mg/dL is considered low; however, each person's goals are different. Your provider may recommend that you take action to increase your blood sugar at a different level. Discuss that level/number with your provider so you know when to take action.

### Hypoglycemia levels

There are three levels of low blood sugar. Each level may require a different treatment approach based on the severity and potential risk. It's important to take immediate action to treat low blood sugar, as untreated hypoglycemia can lead to loss of consciousness, seizures, and death.

**Level 1:** Less than 70 mg/dL

**Level 2:** Less than 54 mg/dL; seriously low blood sugar

**Level 3:** Severe low blood sugar defined as not having a threshold; external assistance needed to treat

### Possible causes

- Certain medications
- Impaired kidney or liver functions
- Alcohol
- Advanced age
- Lack of adequate carbohydrates in meal
- Skipped or delayed meal/snack
- Neuropathy
- Physical activity
- History of low blood sugars

### Signs/Symptoms

- Shaky, fast heartbeat, sweating, dizzy, anxious, hungry, blurry vision, weakness or fatigue, headache, irritable
- Low blood sugar during the night (nocturnal hypoglycemia): vivid dreams, night sweats, waking up hungry or with a headache, elevated/rebound or low blood sugar levels in the morning

NOTE: Consult your provider if you experience nocturnal hypoglycemia, as changes to your medication and treatment plan may be necessary.



### WHEN TO CALL YOUR PROVIDER

- If your blood sugar level stays low (below 70 mg/dL) or you do not feel better after 30 minutes
- You experience Level 1 hypoglycemia more than once in a week
- You experience Level 2 or Level 3 hypoglycemia
- If you struggle to notice the signs/symptoms of hypoglycemia when your blood sugar drops, you could have a condition known as hypoglycemia unawareness. It's important to discuss it with your provider.

# TREATMENT

## LEVEL 1

### Less than 70 mg/dL

Follow the 15/15 rule (Steps 1-4)

**STEP 1:** If your blood sugar level is below 70 mg/dL, consume **15 grams** of carbohydrates

**STEP 2:** Wait **15 minutes** and then check your blood sugar again

**STEP 3:** If your blood sugar level is still below 70 mg/dL, consume another 15 grams of carbohydrates

**STEP 4:** When your blood sugar is within a normal range, eat something. If your regular mealtime is less than one hour away, eat your meal. If not, eat a small snack containing carbohydrates such as ½ meat sandwich, 6 crackers with peanut butter, or 6 crackers with cheese.

NOTE: If you are experiencing symptoms of low blood sugar and you are unable to check your blood sugar or concerned that your blood sugar is dropping too quickly to check, you may need to treat for hypoglycemia first.

## LEVEL 2

### Less than 54 mg/dL; seriously low blood sugar

It's recommended that you treat the low blood sugar level first and, once your blood sugar level has returned to a normal range, contact your provider to discuss medication and/or treatment changes. Individuals who experience Level 2 hypoglycemia should keep a glucagon emergency kit, especially if using insulin.

## LEVEL 3

### Severe low blood sugar with no threshold

Treatment for severe low blood sugar requires assistance from a family member/friend and/or emergency services.

**Glucagon** is a hormone made by your pancreas that helps to raise your blood sugar. A glucagon injection instantly raises blood sugar in the event of a severe hypoglycemic episode, so it's important to be prepared.

- A glucagon emergency kit contains a glucagon injection that can be used when a person is experiencing Level 2 (blood sugar less than 54 mg/dL) and/or Level 3 (no threshold) low blood sugar.
- A family member or friend needs to inject glucagon since the person in need of glucagon may be unconscious. Your designated family member/friend should be prepared in advance to act quickly in the event of a low blood sugar emergency. Emergency contacts need to know:
  - When to use the glucagon
  - Where you keep your glucagon
  - How to use glucagon and how much to give
  - What to do once you regain consciousness
  - If/when to give a second glucagon injection
  - To call 911 if you do not respond after receiving the glucagon injection and/or if they need to provide a second dose of glucagon\*

\*Work with your provider on individualized instructions for both you and your designated family member/friend on using a glucagon emergency kit.

## HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)

Hyperglycemia is a blood sugar level **above** your recommended range. Frequent high blood sugar levels over time can increase the risk for diabetes-related complications so it's important to work with your healthcare team to establish a management/treatment plan.

Blood sugar levels above 250 mg/dL may require you to take special action.

Possible Causes	Signs/Symptoms	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Too much food</li><li>• Inadequate insulin or medication</li><li>• Illness</li><li>• Stress</li><li>• Infection</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extreme thirst</li><li>• Frequent urination</li><li>• Dry skin</li><li>• Hunger</li><li>• Blurry vision</li><li>• Drowsiness</li><li>• Slow-healing wounds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check your blood sugar levels as recommended by your provider</li><li>• Call your provider if your blood sugar levels are higher than your goal for 3 consecutive days and you do not know why</li><li>• Follow a consistent meal schedule; a carbohydrate-controlled meal plan may be recommended</li><li>• Take medications as prescribed; exceptions as noted by your provider (e.g., when you're sick)</li></ul>

### Sick Day Recommendations

**Not feeling well?** Illness and stress related to feeling unwell can cause blood sugar levels to rise. Left untreated, this cycle can lead to serious health issues.



### WHEN TO CALL YOUR PROVIDER

- You are unable to eat or drink
- You vomit more than once
- You have diarrhea more than 5 times or for more than 24 hours
- Blood glucose is higher than 250 mg/dL on two or more readings within 24 hours
- Your temperature is higher than 101 degrees F
- You test positive for ketones in urine or blood



## SECTION 2

# Nutrition

Eating a balanced, healthy diet is an important part of promoting overall health and managing your diabetes.

Carbohydrates (carbs) are a type of nutrient found in certain foods and drinks. The three main types of carbs are starches, sugar, and fiber. Carbs break down into sugar that your body uses for energy and are an important part of a balanced diet. However, because carbs impact your blood sugar, it's important to monitor your portions. Not consuming enough carbs can sometimes lead to low blood glucose levels (hypoglycemia) so timing and balance are important.

Using the general guidelines below, work with your provider, dietitian, and/or certified diabetes educator to create your individualized nutrition plan.

## CREATE YOUR HEALTHY PLATE

For accurate portions, use a 9-inch plate and make servings approximately the size of your palm and the thickness of a deck of cards.



### NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

- Fresh, frozen, or canned green beans
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes
- Mushrooms
- Asparagus
- Leafy greens
- Bell peppers
- Onions
- Beets
- Brussels sprouts



### LEAN PROTEIN

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Fish
- Seafood
- Lean cuts of beef and pork
- Tofu
- Eggs
- Low-fat cheese



### GRAINS & STARCHES

- Whole grain breads, cereal, crackers, pasta
- Cream of wheat, oatmeal, grits
- Brown rice, corn tortillas
- Corn
- Peas
- Potatoes
- Winter squash
- Beans & legumes



### MILK & YOGURT

- Skim or low-fat milk
- Nonfat or low-fat yogurt
- Plain soy milk



### FRUIT

- Fresh
- Frozen
- Canned in 100% fruit juice

## SECTION 3

# Physical Activity

Regular physical activity can help you manage your diabetes, feel better, and improve your overall health. Brisk walking, yoga, dancing, swimming, weight training, gardening, cycling, hiking, and water aerobics are great ways to stay active and social. Find activities you enjoy and get moving!

## BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### Health

- Weight management
- Improves blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure, immunity, and energy
- Reduces risk of chronic disease
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, heart, and joints
- Reduces injury frequency and severity

### Well-being

- Improves mood, quality of sleep, confidence, and quality of life
- Reduces anxiety, depression, and stress
- Increases mental sharpness
- Prolongs independence and full function
- Reduces injury frequency and severity

## SAFETY TIPS

- Talk to your provider before starting any exercise routine
  - Ask about safe and unsafe blood sugar levels for before, during, and after a workout or activity
  - Discuss how to warm up and cool down safely
- Monitor your blood sugar levels more often and watch for signs of low or high levels
  - Your blood sugar levels may increase or decrease during physical activity, and for up to 24 hours after exercise
- Carry carbohydrate snacks in case your blood sugar levels drop

Speak with your provider about the exercise intensity you can engage in and, when possible, follow these general recommendations:

- Engage in 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity
- Try not to skip more than 2 consecutive days without exercise
- Reduce sedentary time by getting up every 30 minutes
- Resistance training 2-3 times a week
- Flexibility and balance training 2-3 times a week

## SECTION 4

# Health Screenings

Certain health screenings are performed regularly to improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of developing diabetes-related complications. Talk to your provider about your health goals and how to meet them, and work together to develop a schedule that includes tests/exams appropriate for you.

Below are general care guidelines for most adults with diabetes.



- **Primary Care Provider (PCP) visits,** every 3-6 months
  - A1C checked
- **Annual Exams**
  - Physical exam
  - Retinal eye exam
  - Foot exam at each provider visit. Talk with your provider about how to perform at-home foot checks in between office visits.
  - Blood work and urine test to check kidney function
- **Dental exam,** every 6 months
- **Vaccinations** are recommended for people with diabetes. Hyperglycemia can decrease the effectiveness of your white blood cells, increasing the risk for infections. Develop a vaccination schedule with your provider.

## Common Vaccinations

- Influenza (Flu shot)
- COVID-19
- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (TDAP)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
- Zoster (Shingles)

## SECTION 5

# Travel Recommendations

Before traveling, always talk to your provider about steps you should take to prepare. Request written instructions for managing your diabetes and safely transporting and storing your medication/insulin, and get a prescription in case you run out of your medication/insulin during your trip. Keep these documents with you in case of an emergency or if you are questioned by security.



## TRAVEL TIPS

- Wear a diabetes ID bracelet or necklace
- Pack **twice** the amount of medication/insulin and blood sugar testing supplies you typically need. Keep these items with you at all times.
- Carry snacks that work with your individual meal plan
- Always carry carbohydrates to treat low blood sugar (See page 7, **Hypoglycemia Treatment**)
- If traveling to another time zone, keep your watch on your home time zone and discuss timing of meals and medication dosing/insulin injections with your provider
- If traveling to a country with a foreign language, learn to say, “I have diabetes” and how to ask for orange juice or sugar in the primary language
- Prior to your trip, check the **International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers** (IAMAT) for a list of English-speaking providers

– [iamat.org](http://iamat.org), 716-754-4883, TTY: 711

## SECTION 6

# Information at a Glance: My Healthcare Team



Fill out this page and carry it with you to provide pertinent information for your healthcare team, first responders, and family members.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies (food/medication): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Medical Alerts: \_\_\_\_\_

**BCBSAZ NURSE ON CALL** 1-866-422-2729, TTY: 711

### EMERGENCY CONTACT(S)

Emergency Contact	Relationship	Location of Contact (City, State)	Phone Number	Alternate Number

### HEALTHCARE PROVIDER CONTACT INFORMATION

Provider Name	Provider Type	Phone Number	Alternate Number	Notes
	PCP			
	Pharmacy			
	Dentist			
	Dietitian			

## MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS

This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter (OTC) medications, dietary supplements, herbs, and vitamins.

Medication	Dosage	Directions	Usage (reason for taking)

## BLOOD GLUCOSE LOG

Date	Time	Blood Sugar Level (mg/dL)	Notes

Use Notes section to include any important information related to the blood sugar level such as fasting, before or after a meal, bedtime, list what you ate, after exercise, etc.

## SYMPTOMS/QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH PROVIDER

Symptom	Date Symptom Started	Notes	Questions

## SCHEDULED PROVIDER APPOINTMENTS

Take this information to all of your appointments and discuss with providers.

Area of Focus	Specialty (PCP, Specialist, Dietitian)	Appointment Date	Notes





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