

Diabetes Toolkit

An Educational Guide to Help You Prevent or Manage Diabetes

Whether this is a new diagnosis that came as a surprise, or it runs in your family, you are not alone. According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes impacts over 38 million Americans with serious consequences. 1.2 million Americans are diagnosed every year, while 97.6 million American adults live with prediabetes.

This diagnosis may feel overwhelming, but learning about your condition can help you and your care team take the right steps to make you feel better and avoid complications.

Review this toolkit whenever you need, whether at the onset of your diagnosis or as a quick refresher!



A Deeper Dive into Diabetes Mellitus

If you're diagnosed with diabetes that means your body has difficulty making or using the insulin hormone. Insulin is a critical hormone made by your pancreas. Your body needs it to turn food into energy and without that necessary step, sugar (glucose) builds up in the blood, leading to health complications.

Type I Diabetes (T1D)

This form of diabetes happens when the body's immune system attacks cells in the pancreas that make insulin. People with T1D cannot make any insulin.

Screening: Anyone with a first-degree relative with T1D (parent, sibling, child) should get screened.

Type II Diabetes (T2DM)

This form of diabetes is caused by an insulin deficiency that results in hyperglycemia, in other words, high blood sugar. T2DM stems from insulin resistance which is thought to be from genetic factors and obesity. Having an increased visceral adiposity (stomach fat) is typically associated with fat accumulation within the liver, pancreas, and skeletal muscle.

Screening: A healthcare practitioner may consider screening for T2DM in adults who are overweight or obese and have additional risk factors.

Gestational Diabetes

This type of diabetes is caused by the body not making enough insulin during pregnancy and can be developed in women who don't already have diabetes. All pregnant women have some insulin resistance during the late stages of pregnancy, but for those who have insulin resistance before pregnancy, they are more likely to have gestational diabetes.



Diabetes impacts over
38 million Americans

continued on next page...

A Deeper Dive into Diabetes Mellitus (cont.)

Diabetes Symptoms

The common symptoms of diabetes can include the following:

- ✓ Frequent urination
- ✓ Extreme thirst
- ✓ Increased appetite
- ✓ Extreme fatigue / weakness
- ✓ Blurry vision
- ✓ Slow healing cuts / bruises
- ✓ Tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands / feet



“Know Your ABCs”

Adults with diabetes have an increased likelihood of suffering from heart disease, stroke and amputations than those who don't have diabetes. It is important to manage and understand your ABCs to decrease your risk of diabetes complications such as kidney disease, blindness, limb amputations, and hypoglycemia. Talk to your doctor about the right ABC goals for you and how often you should be tested!



A is for
A1C



B is for
BLOOD
PRESSURE



C is for
CHOLESTEROL

A1c is the average of your 3-months blood glucose. **Blood pressure** is the force of blood against your blood vessels. When your blood pressure rises, it causes your heart to work very hard. There are two types of **cholesterol** in the blood: LDL “bad” cholesterol and HDL “good” cholesterol.

How to Move Forward with the Management or Prevention of Diabetes

You can play a big role in managing your diabetes, lowering the chance of serious complications, or preventing the onset of diabetes by eating well and staying active.

Nutrition and Diabetes

To help with diabetes management, it is extremely important to understand how to fuel your body and balance your blood glucose levels. Carbohydrates (Carbs) play a large role in influencing your blood glucose levels; they are broken down in the body into glucose (type of sugar). When the body digests the carbs and turns it into glucose, the pancreas releases insulin to help the cells absorb the glucose. If someone's blood glucose is too high it's called **hyperglycemia**, while low blood glucose is known as **hypoglycemia**.



Understanding Carbs: There are three main types of carbohydrates in food:

- **Starches**
- **Sugar**
- **Fibers**

The goal is to eat nutrient dense carbs: those high in vitamins, minerals, and fibers and low in added sugars, sodium and unhealthy fats. When in doubt, try to target minimally processed carbohydrate foods. Examples of healthy carbohydrates include, but are not limited to, the following:



Vegetables



Fruit



Whole Grains
(brown rice,
oatmeal, etc.)

You can control your diabetes management with what you eat. The healthy plate method (shown to the right) can help you find an eating style that works for you!



What to Eat

If you're wondering what foods are best for satisfying your taste buds and keeping you healthy, there are plenty! The most important thing is to keep your blood sugar at a healthy and stable level.

Eat a variety of foods: Fill your plate with each food group so you get a balanced meal of protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats.

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables: Fruits and vegetables are filled with lots of dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Choose whole grains: Whole grains have lots of dietary fiber and can help you maintain a steady blood sugar level. Eat minimally processed whole grains, such as oats, brown rice, quinoa, and wild rice.

Consume unsaturated fats: It's important to consume "healthy" fats that can lower bad cholesterol and raise good cholesterol. Examples include mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated fats such as olive oil, nuts, avocados, and fish.

Reduce salt intake: Eating less salt will help with blood pressure. Try to substitute salt with other spices and pick low-sodium options whenever possible.

Consume minimally processed foods: It is important to be mindful about what processed foods you're consuming. Ultra-processed foods, such as sugary beverages or chips, can be full of added sugars, unhealthy fats, and lots of sodium. Aim for options like frozen fruits / vegetables or canned fruits / vegetables with no added sugars or syrups.

Don't skip meals and be mindful while you eat: Eating at your regular mealtimes will help your mood and let you focus. Find an eating pattern that works for you and stick with it. Try to eat mindfully; when you are distracted while eating you may eat more.

Dining Out with Diabetes

To help manage your diabetes, consider these few steps:



Know Your Plan: Having a meal plan helps you know what kinds of foods to eat, when to eat, and how much to eat. This concept can be applied eating out or at home.



Pack a Snack: When eating out, you can't always guarantee eating at your regular mealtimes. To avoid a blood sugar dip, bring a healthy snack along with you!



Choose heart-healthy items: Pick items on the menu filled with lean meats, veggies, and whole grains. People with diabetes have a greater risk of heart disease. It's important to keep this in mind when choosing meals.



Pair a carbohydrate with a healthy fat or protein: By pairing a carbohydrate with a healthy fat or protein, it will slow glucose absorption and offset blood sugar spikes. For example, consider having peanut butter on your toast, instead of butter.



Downsize portions: To ensure your glucose levels are at good levels, keep your portions in check. It could be helpful to box up part of your meal as soon as the meal arrives.



Plan for dessert: If you'd like to have dessert, it may be best to eat fewer carbs earlier on in your meal.



Tip for Dining Out: Downsize your portion by boxing up half your meal and eat it as leftovers at a later time.

How to Read Food Labels

One way to enhance your understanding about what to eat is through making sense of the food labels. This is a quick guide for how to navigate each category on the food label.



A Serving Size

All information relayed on the label is based on a single serving size. Eating more than the serving size means you will be getting more calories, sugars, etc.

B Amount per Serving

The information on the left side of a label shows you the total of the different nutrients in a single serving of food.

C Calories

Calories are units of energy; this is the energy your body consumes to be able to function.

D Total Carbohydrate

The total carbohydrate on a label encompasses all three types of carbs: sugar, starch, and fiber. Under total carbohydrates, you will see the separation of dietary fibers and total sugars.

E Added Sugar

This helps you see the difference between natural sugars and sugars that were added during the processing of the food.

F Fiber

Fiber is the part of the plant that can't be digested. The amount of fiber needed can depend on age and gender.

G Fats

Total fat shows how much fat is in one serving of food. It is best to eat foods low in saturated or trans-fat and replace with foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

H Sodium

This is the scientific terminology for salt. Although this doesn't impact blood sugar, too much sodium can increase the risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Many processed foods can have hidden salts. It is best to stay below 2,300 mg of salt a day.

List of Ingredients

The ingredient list order is very important. The first item on the list has the highest amount in the food and from there goes in descending order.

Nutrition Facts

Servings Per Container 2
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g **18%**

Saturated Fat 3g **15%**

Trans Fat 3g

Cholesterol 30mg **10%**

Sodium 470mg **20%**

Total Carbohydrate 31g **10%**

Dietary Fiber 0g **0%**

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A **4%**

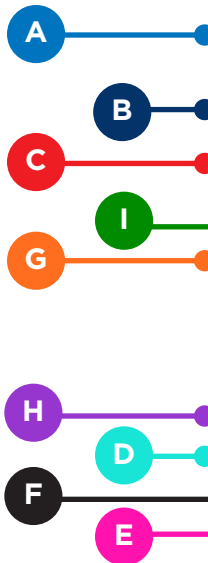
Vitamin C **2%**

Calcium **20%**

Iron **4%**

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g



I Percent Daily Values (% DV)

The % DV is shown on the far right of a label. This will show you the percent breakdown based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet. You typically want to have less than 5% for nutrients you're looking to limit (i.e.: sodium and saturated fats) and 20% for nutrients you want more of like fiber, vitamin D, calcium and iron.

Physical Activity with Diabetes

Getting regular exercise plays a big role in controlling diabetes. When you're active, your cells become sensitive to insulin. This makes it work more effectively to lower your blood sugar. The more you exercise, the better you become at processing glucose, raising your insulin sensitivity. It is recommended to get around 150 minutes of moderate - intensity aerobic exercise per week.



Aerobic vs. Anaerobic Exercise: Aerobic exercise involves movement that allows oxygen to get to your muscles. Your body also uses fat and glucose to provide energy. Anaerobic exercise is performed with an intensity that doesn't allow oxygen delivery to muscles and leverages glycogen (a form of glucose) from muscles to be used for energy.

Examples of aerobic exercise



Walking, running, biking

Examples of anaerobic exercise



Weighlifting, HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training)

Recommended amount of moderate aerobic exercise per week:

150 minutes



Tips for Traveling

Diabetes requires constant care, but it shouldn't deter you from traveling! Here are a few things to keep in mind before you head out:



- **Visit your doctor** to make sure you are well prepared for your trip. Speak about the adjustment of insulin if time zones are changing, the need for a written prescription in case you run out, and a letter explaining your need for medical supplies.
- **Get a medical ID bracelet** saying you have diabetes and any other conditions.
- **Pack well** to make sure any diabetes supplies are in a carry-on and ensure you have twice as much medicine as you think you may need.
- **For airport security** get an optional TSA notification card to help the screening process go smoother. People with diabetes are exempt from the 3.4 oz liquid rule for medicines, and fast-acting carbs (i.e., juice).

Having a Sick Day with Diabetes

With diabetes, a common illness can make you feel worse than usual, and it could make it more difficult to manage your blood sugar levels. When you're sick, your body secretes hormones to fight the illness which may raise blood sugar levels. You may need to test your blood sugar more often.



Prediabetes: Reducing the Risk of Diabetes

About Prediabetes

Prediabetes is a warning sign that the body's insulin levels are rising. This means you have higher than normal blood sugar levels and will need to adjust certain lifestyle behaviors to avoid developing type II diabetes. However, diabetes is preventable! By losing 5 to 7% of body weight, your risk goes down. It is important to take this diagnosis seriously so that you can prevent the onset of type II diabetes.

Prediabetes typically does not have unique warning signs or symptoms but you can be on the lookout for any of the common type II diabetes signs or symptoms.

There are some common risk factors for type II diabetes which include the following:

- Overweight / Obese
- 45 years or older
- Poor diet
- Lack of physical activity
- Age
- Family history of type II diabetes
- Race or ethnicity
- Gestational diabetes
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- Poor sleep
- Tobacco use



Your risk for diabetes goes down by losing
5 to 7% of body weight.

Managing Prediabetes - How to Prevent Type II Diabetes



Test for prediabetes



Lose weight



Eat healthy foods



Engage in routine physical activity



Control your blood pressure and cholesterol



Don't smoke



Additional Resources to Help YOU

USFHP is excited to share news about some helpful apps available to you for **free!** There is no cost to download, and they do not collect any of your information. The apps were created by the US Department of Veteran Affairs National Center for PTSD.



FREE Weight Management App

This app is called MOVE! Coach and is designed to help you manage your weight. Within the app, you can do the following:

- Build weight management skills to learn about healthy eating and routine exercise
- Keep a daily weight diary to track your progress on healthy eating and exercise to help reach your weight management goals
- Use calculation tools to find your exercise intensity, calories burned and activity - to - step conversion



Use this QR code to download the app today!

FREE Mindfulness App

This app is called Mindfulness Coach and is designed to help you manage stress. This app assists you with the practice of mindfulness meditation, which can help reduce stress. Within this app, you can do the following:

- Engage in a self-guided training program to help you understand and adopt a simple mindfulness practice
- Practice with 12 audio-guided mindfulness exercises
- Track your progress over time, with customizable reminders



Use this QR code to download the app today!

Need more resources and individualized help?

Reach out to USFHP's Care Management team at: 1-800-241-4848

Resources:

- https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/CD/diabetes/VADoD-Diabetes-CPG_Final_508.pdf
- <https://diabetes.org/about-diabetes/type-2>
- <https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition/understanding-carbs>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/traveling-with-diabetes.html>
- <https://www.jdrf.org/t1d-resources/t1detect/#:-:text=What%20is%20type%20%20diabetes,producing%20cells%20in%20the%20pancreas.>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prediabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20355278>
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/prediabetes-diet#:-:text=Stay%20active,aim%20for%2010%2C000%20daily%20steps.>
- <https://www.eatright.org/health/health-conditions/diabetes/healthful-eating-with-diabetes>



US FAMILY
HEALTH PLAN

St Vincent Catholic Medical
Centers of New York

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Diabetes Toolkit

*An Educational Guide
to Help You Prevent or
Manage Diabetes*

Start Preventing or Managing Diabetes Today!

LetsGetChecked - Reminder!

USFHP wants to remind you about our partnership with LetsGetChecked (LGC). This partnership provides tests to measure your A1C, which is your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months. The test is used to detect diabetes and determine how well your diabetes is being managed.

This easy-to-use test kit comes with everything you need to collect your blood sample from home. It even comes with free return shipping to the lab.

**Call the LGC Team for any questions
about this test at:**

1-855-554-1959 (TTY 711),
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

LetsGet
Checked®

