

Living with Diabetes

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What is Diabetes?

Diabetes means you have too much sugar in your blood. The medical word for sugar in the blood is glucose. Your body changes most of the food you eat into sugar (glucose). Sugar travels in your blood to all the cells in your body. Your body makes a chemical (hormone) called insulin to help sugar move from your blood (bloodstream) into the cells for energy. Your cells need sugar for energy and to keep you healthy. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make insulin, doesn't make enough insulin or the insulin you make doesn't work right. There are 2 types:

Type 1 diabetes - *The body cannot make insulin. This occurs more often in children and young adults. People with type 1 must inject insulin to control their diabetes.*

Type 2 diabetes - *The body can make some insulin or the insulin you make doesn't work right. Type 2 often starts in adults but children can have it too. It is more common in overweight people or if someone in the family has diabetes. People with type 2 control their diabetes with activity, weight control, what they eat, and diabetes medications.*

Checking your blood sugar - You can have a high or low blood sugar problem but not know it. That is why it's important to check your blood sugar often. Your healthcare team will explain when and how to check your blood sugar levels.

Taking your medications - You may be prescribed a medication you take by mouth or by injection to manage your diabetes. Before you leave the hospital, your healthcare team will explain how and when to take your medications.

Healthy eating - Eating healthy is an important part of managing your blood sugar. Your health care team will explain simple ways to help you get started with nutrition and portion control.

What you need to know before you leave the Hospital:

- *How to check my blood sugar (glucose) levels.*
- *How to take my medications.*
 - *If prescribed, how to administer my insulin.*
- *How to make healthy food choices to manage my blood sugar.*
- *How to stay active to control my blood sugar levels.*
- *When to call the doctor.*

Always check with your doctor before making any changes in your diabetes treatment plan.

Checking your blood sugar:

Your target blood sugar level: Before meals _____ At bedtime _____

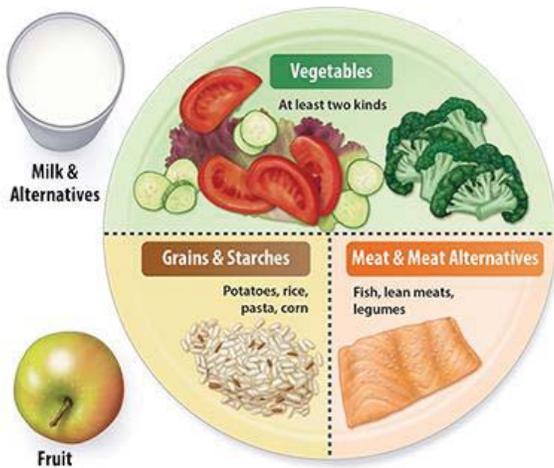
Your blood sugar should be checked every _____

And if you have any of these symptoms:

Signs your blood sugar may be low: Shaking, sweating, rapid heartbeat, headache, hunger, weakness, fatigue, impaired vision, anxiety, irritability, and dizziness.

If your Blood sugar is low (less than 70 mg/dl): Drink 4 ounces of fruit juice or 8 ounces of 1% Milk and recheck your blood sugar in 15 minutes.

Signs your blood sugar may be high: Increased thirst, headache, trouble concentrating, blurred vision, frequent peeing, fatigue (weak, tired feeling). Call your doctor if your blood sugar stays over 240 mg/dl even though you have taken your medications.



Eating Healthy:

Often when people are diagnosed with Diabetes, they don't know where to begin. One way is to adjust the portions you are already eating. It's an easy way to get started with managing your blood glucose levels. Focus more on filling a 9-inch plate with non-starchy vegetables and fresh protein foods. Draw an imaginary line on your plate, select your foods, and enjoy your meal. Once you've changed your portion sizes, you can work on making healthier choices for each food group.

Activity:

Make exercise a regular part of your day. Plan activities you like. Start slow and increase the time you exercise as you get stronger and feel better. Consult with your physician before starting any new strenuous exercise routine.

When to call your doctor:

You can't keep liquids down, you haven't eaten normally for 24 hours, or you have vomiting or diarrhea more than 6 hours.

You have a fever of 100.4 or higher.

You aren't certain what to do to take care of yourself.

Diabetes cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Eating healthy, being active, taking medications prescribed to you, you can lead a healthy life with Diabetes!