

# Getting Started with Your Diabetes Care

## What is Type 2 Diabetes?

Diabetes is a health problem that happens when you have too much “glucose” or sugar in your blood. Many of the foods we eat have sugar. Diabetes happens when the body is not able to use all the sugar from the foods you eat and it stays in your blood. People who don’t control their diabetes for many years may end up with:

- eye damage that can cause you to lose your vision,
- nerve damage that can lead to amputation of foot or leg, and
- kidney damage.

Luckily, we have good medicines for diabetes now and if the sugar levels are controlled, we can prevent this damage from happening.

## What can I do to take care of my diabetes?

### 1 Follow your care plan every day



## Common Diabetes Terms

**Glucose:** Sugar

**Glucose Level:** Amount of sugar in your blood

**Glucose meter:** Device that you use at home to measure the amount of sugar in your blood.

**A1c:** A blood test you get at the doctor’s office that measures your average blood sugar level over the past three months.

**Cholesterol:** A substance that looks like fat. The body makes it and needs it to build healthy cells.

## Care Plan Checklist

- Eat small portions.
- Eat more proteins and vegetables.
- Choose foods low in calories, fat, sugar, and salt.
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week or more.
- Take your medicine on time and even if you feel well.
- Refill your medicine on time.
- Know what your right glucose level is.
- Check your glucose levels and keep track of the results you get.
- Watch your feet for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling.
- Brush your teeth and floss every day.

### 2 Get your checkups regularly

#### Visit the doctor to check your:

- A1c results
- Blood pressure
- Feet
- Glucose levels
- Weight

#### Visit other specialists to get:

- A dental exam
- An eye exam

#### Get lab tests to check your:

- Cholesterol levels
- A1c
- Kidneys



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Glucose Meter

## Take Action!



Ask family members and friends to eat healthy with you.



Exercise. It helps control your blood sugar and reduce your need for medicines.



Talk with your doctor about a diabetes medicine called metformin. Many new patients use it. Also, ask if you should take a statin. This medicine helps diabetes patients reduce their risk for a heart disease.



Let your doctor know what is working well and not working well with your care plan.

### Call 911 if...

- you have problems seeing, talking, or keeping your balance

### Call your doctor if...

- you are sick and your glucose level is much higher or much lower than your normal levels
- you have been vomiting or have had diarrhea for more than 6 hours
- you have a wound that does not heal

This brief is also available in Spanish. Visit [www.ncfh.org](http://www.ncfh.org) to get these materials and to also see a digital story on diabetes.

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