

Taking Care of Type 2 Diabetes

Toolkit No. 3

What is type 2 diabetes?

Everyone's blood has some glucose (sugar) in it because your body needs glucose for energy. Normally, your body breaks food down into glucose and sends it into your bloodstream. Insulin, a hormone made by your pancreas, helps get the glucose from the blood into the cells to be used for energy. In people with type 2 diabetes, the pancreas doesn't make enough insulin or the insulin doesn't work very well, or both. Without insulin, your blood glucose rises.

How can type 2 diabetes affect me?

Type 2 diabetes sometimes leads to problems such as heart disease, stroke, nerve damage, and kidney or eye problems. But the good news is that keeping blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol on target can help delay or prevent problems.

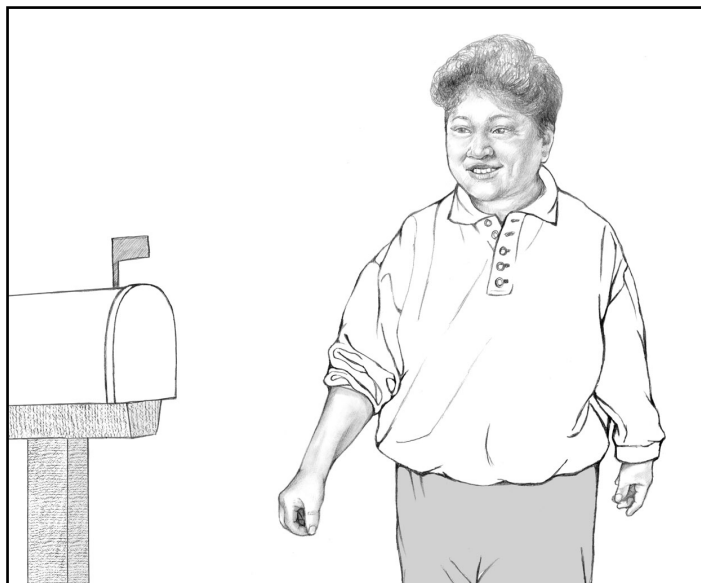
How is type 2 diabetes managed?

Most of the day-to-day care of diabetes is up to you. Your plan for taking care of your diabetes will include

- choosing what, how much, and when to eat
- including physical activity in your daily routine
- taking medications (if needed) to help you reach your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol targets

What can I do to take care of my diabetes?

- Choose targets for the ABCs of diabetes care:
 - A: your A-1-C check for average blood glucose
 - B: your blood pressure
 - C: your cholesterol levels
- Work with your health care team to make a plan that helps you reach your targets.
- Keep track of your numbers.
- If you're not reaching your targets, change your plan as needed to stay on target.



Regular physical activity can lower your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Your Blood Glucose

Targets established by the American Diabetes Association (ADA) are listed below. Your personal targets may differ. Talk with your health care team about the best targets for you.

You'll check your own blood glucose using a blood glucose meter. The meter tells you what your blood glucose is at a particular moment.

ADA Targets for Blood Glucose	My Usual Results	My Targets
Before meals: 90 to 130 mg/dl	_____ to _____	_____ to _____
2 hours after the start of a meal: less than 180 mg/dl	less than _____	less than _____

At least twice a year, your doctor should order an A-1-C check. The results will give your average blood glucose for the past 2 to 3 months.

ADA Target for the A-1-C	My Last Result	My Target
Below 7%		

Your Blood Pressure

At every office visit, your health care team should check your blood pressure.

ADA Target	My Last Result	My Target
Below 130/80 mmHg		

Your Cholesterol/Triglycerides

Every year, your health care team should check your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Types	ADA Targets	My Last Result	My Target
LDL cholesterol	Below 100 mg/dl		
HDL cholesterol	Above 40 mg/dl (for men)		
	Above 50 mg/dl (for women)		
Triglycerides	Below 150 mg/dl		

What do I need to know about meal planning, physical activity, and medications?

Meal Planning

Many people think that having diabetes means you can't eat your favorite foods. But you can still eat the foods you like. It's the amount that counts. Ask for a referral to a dietitian who specializes in diabetes. Together, you'll design a personalized meal plan that can help you reach your goals.

- **Count carbohydrates (also called carbs).** Carbohydrate foods—bread, tortillas, biscuits, rice, crackers, cereal, fruit, juice, milk, yogurt, potatoes, corn, peas, sweets—raise your blood glucose levels the most. Keeping the amount of carbohydrate in your meals and snacks consistent can help you reach your blood glucose targets.
- **Choose foods low in saturated fat.** Cutting down on foods that have saturated fat can help you lower your cholesterol and prevent heart disease. Foods high in saturated fat include meats, butter, whole milk, cream, cheese, lard, shortening, many baked goods, and tropical oils such as palm and coconut oil.
- **Lose weight if needed.** Try to lose weight by cutting back on food portions and increasing your daily activity.

- **Increase the fiber in your diet.** Include high-fiber foods, such as fruits, vegetables, dried beans and peas, oatmeal, and whole grain breads and cereals, in your diet.

Physical Activity

Regular physical activity helps lower your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. It also keeps your joints flexible, strengthens your heart and bones, tones your muscles, and helps you deal with stress. Your health care team may want to check your heart function before you start doing new activities. They can help you plan what kinds of physical activities are best for you. The different kinds of activities include

- **Being active throughout the day**
Examples: gardening, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or walking around while you talk on the phone—working up to about 30 minutes of activity a day
- **Aerobic exercise**
Examples: walking, dancing, rowing, swimming, or riding a bicycle—working up to about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- **Strength training**
Example: lifting light weights several times a week
- **Stretching**
Example: stretching your whole body, especially your arms and legs

Medications

Many people need medications along with meal planning and physical activity to reach their blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol targets. If you've had type 2 diabetes for a while, you may need a change in your diabetes pills to reach your blood glucose targets. If you need insulin shots, it doesn't mean that your diabetes is getting worse. It just means that you need a change in how you reach your target numbers. If it's difficult for you to reach your target numbers, talk with your health care team about whether medications can help.

