What Is Diabetes?
Diabetes is a condition in which the body does not make or use insulin well. Your body uses insulin to convert food into energy.

What Causes Diabetes?
The cause of diabetes is unknown, but factors including genetics, obesity, and lack of physical activity appear to play key roles.

Why Is Managing My Diabetes Important?
Diabetes results in too much sugar in the bloodstream. This can damage body organs. A heart-threatening complication of diabetes is cardiovascular disease. Two out of three people with diabetes will die of heart disease or stroke.

Other common complications of diabetes include:
- Kidney failure
- Blindness
- Peripheral nerve damage
- Toe, foot, and leg amputation

By managing your blood sugar, you can avoid or delay many of these serious complications. It’s up to you. Your healthcare provider can help.

Healthy Movement

Benefits
- Activity will help you burn extra calories – and lose weight.
- Activity will help your body control glucose by increasing your metabolism and replacing fat with muscle.
- Activity will improve your body’s response to insulin.
- Activity will help you reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Activity will improve your mood and energy level.

Tips
- Aim for about 30 minutes of activity most days – all at once, or in three 10-minute sessions. Start with 5–10 minutes a day and build up slowly.
- Walk in the mail with a friend. Ride a stationary bike while reading a good book. Take a dance class. Walk the dog. Garden. Take the stairs.
- Do something – any activity is better than no activity.
- Always ask your healthcare provider for advice and instructions before getting started.

Healthy Eating

Benefits
- Balancing when and how much you eat will help you maintain your blood sugar level.
- Eating smaller amounts of healthy food, more often, can also help you lose weight.
- Eating right reduces cholesterol and keeps blood pressure in check.
- People with diabetes can eat the same variety of healthy foods as others – no specialty foods are required.

Tips
- Limit red meat, fatty, sugary, white, whole milk, or any food with hydrogenated fats on the label.
- Eat 2–3 servings of lean meat, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, poultry, fish, dry beans, egg whites, or nuts a day.
- Replace processed breads, grains, or pastas with whole-grain alternatives.
- Eat 2–3 servings of fruit and 3–5 servings of a variety of brightly colored vegetables and nuts.
- Use plant oils such as olive or canola.

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This information is available in other formats to people with disabilities.
Call PrimeWest Health Member Services at 1-866-431-0801, TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711, or through Minnesota Relay Service at 1-877-627-3848 (speech to speech relay service).

Name:
Health care provider:
Clinic:
Care Coordinator:

Questions about your health or healthcare provider in your area? Contact PrimeWest Health Care Coordinators at 1-888-588-4420.
How Can I Stay Healthy with Diabetes?

• As advised by your health care provider, monitor your blood sugar and follow instructions for high or low blood sugar situations.
• Stay alert for diabetes complications.
• See your health care provider regularly for diabetes check-ups.
• Try to make healthy choices every day.

How Do I Reduce My Risk of Heart Disease and Stroke?

A – Lower your A1C — a test that measures average blood sugar over the past 3 months — to less than 7.
B – Keep your Blood pressure below 130/80.
C – Reduce your total “bad” Cholesterol (LDL) to below 100.

How Can the Diabetes Health Organizer Help?

• By helping you remember to schedule important screening tests with your health care provider and track test results.
• By reminding you of the key steps you need to take every day to stay healthy with diabetes.
• By providing tips for healthy eating and activity.

Monitor Your Blood Sugar

Take Your Medications as Prescribed

Choose Healthy Foods and Manage Your Weight

Be Active

Wash and Check Your Feet

Brush and Floss Your Teeth

Take an Aspirin a Day

Manage Emotional Stress

If You Smoke, Make a Quit Plan

The Health Organizer is provided for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. If you think you are having a medical emergency, dial 911 immediately.