

wellness tips

Lifestyle changes can go a long way in managing diabetes! Talk with your health care provider about the different things you can do. Here are some tips to get you started.

- ★ **Eat smaller portions:** Instead of 3 big meals a day, eat several smaller meals throughout the day. This can help keep your blood sugar level steady.
- ★ **Choose whole grains:** These have more fiber and take longer to digest than refined grains. This helps keep your blood sugar level steady.
- ★ **Eat a variety of low-calorie produce:** Choose bright or deep-colored fruits and vegetables like spinach, tomatoes, carrots, and broccoli.
- ★ **Avoid sugary drinks and foods:** Replace soda and soft drinks with water or unsweetened tea. Try to avoid processed foods high in corn syrup, salt, and fat.
- ★ **Exercise:** Even small amounts of physical activity can help control your blood sugar and blood pressure. Talk to your provider about how to get started with an exercise plan that's right for you.
- ★ **Learn to manage stress:** Stress hormones can affect your blood sugar level. Stress management can include exercise, breathing exercises, meditation, and talking with someone you trust.
- ★ **Don't smoke:** Nicotine increases blood sugar levels and makes them harder to control. People with diabetes who smoke are also more likely to have complications than non-smokers.



resources

24-Hour Nurse Line

1-866-201-4601 (TTY 711) – the call is free. The number is also listed on the back of your member ID card. Call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

American Diabetes Association (ADA)

www.diabetes.org

1-800-342-2383 – the call is free

American Heart Association (AHA)

www.americanheart.org

1-800-242-8721 – the call is free

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/diabetes

Sources: American Diabetes Association (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Diabetes Action Research and Education Foundation (Diabetes Action), HealthinAging.org



3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308
www.primewest.org

No English? 1-866-431-0801 TTY 711



TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR DIABETES AND YOUR MEDICATION

PW_01-23_025
DHS_Accepted_02/28/2023

overview

When you have diabetes, your body doesn't produce enough insulin or doesn't use it properly. Insulin regulates the amount of sugar in your blood. When you don't have the right amount of insulin, your blood sugar can get too high. High blood sugar can damage your eyes, nerves, kidneys, and cardiovascular system. There is no cure for diabetes, but it *can* be controlled!

There are 3 main types of diabetes—this handout looks at 2 of these.

Type 1 diabetes:

develops when your body doesn't make insulin

Type 2 diabetes:

develops when your body doesn't use insulin properly

One way your health care provider can see if your diabetes is under control is by looking at your HbA1c levels. This is checked through a blood test that shows your average blood sugar levels over the past 2 or 3 months. You should have this test at least 2 times a year.



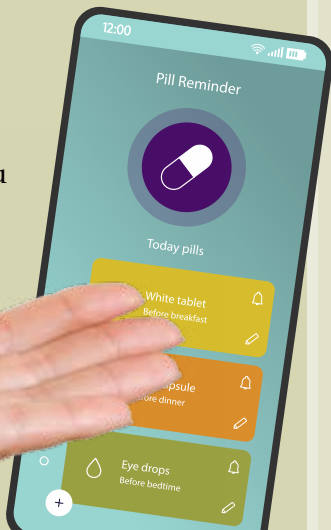
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tips



Your health care provider may prescribe medication to help control your diabetes. You may be prescribed insulin, other injectable medication, oral medication, or a combination of these. It's important to make sure you take medication as directed. The following are a few tips to help you stay on track:

- Use a pillbox to organize your daily medications.
- Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about when to take your medications and how to fit them into your schedule. They may be able to sync your medications to make refilling them easier.
- Set an alarm on your phone or other devices as a reminder to take your medication.
- Enlist the help of family, friends, or community services to help you remember.



insulin

Insulin helps regulate your blood sugar. If you have type 1 diabetes, you will need to use insulin. If you have type 2 diabetes, you may or may not need it. There are 5 types of injectable insulin. Each differs in terms of onset, peak time, and duration.

Onset: How long after injection it takes to start lowering your blood sugar

Peak time: When the insulin is at its maximum strength

Duration: How long it continues to work

The 5 types of insulin are as follows:

1. Rapid-acting

Onset: About 15 minutes / **Peak:** About 1 hour / **Duration:** 2 – 4 hours

2. Regular or short-acting

Onset: Within 30 minutes / **Peak:** 2 – 3 hours / **Duration:** About 3 – 6 hours

3. Intermediate-acting

Onset: About 2 – 4 hours / **Peak:** 4 – 12 hours / **Duration:** 12 – 18 hours

4. Long-acting

Onset: Several hours after injection / **No peak** / **Duration:** Lowers blood sugar levels evenly over a 24-hour period

5. Ultra long-acting

Onset: About 6 hours / **No peak** / **Duration:** 36 hours or longer

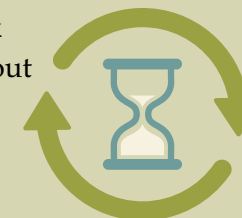


Your health care provider will let you know which insulin is right for you. If you take injectable insulin, they will also talk to you about what type of syringe you need based on your insulin dose.

- Syringes come in different sizes. If your largest dose is getting close to the syringe's maximum capacity, you may want to go to the next size up in case your dose changes.
- If you need to measure your doses in half units, make sure to pick a syringe with half-unit markings.

The following are some tips about injections and timing:

- Insulin should be injected in the same general area of your body each time, but it should not be injected in the exact same place.
- Insulin should be timed with your meals to allow it to work most efficiently. Insulin is most effective when you take it so it starts to work when the sugar from your food begins to enter your bloodstream. Talk with your provider about setting a routine (for example, 30 minutes before eating).



statins

A statin is a medication that helps lower cholesterol. People with diabetes are more likely to have high cholesterol, which raises the risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Regardless of your cholesterol level, if you have diabetes, you should talk to your provider about taking a statin if either of the following is true:

- ☒ You are age 40 or over
- ☒ You are under age 40 and have a cardiovascular disease (CVD)

