



## LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES



### Eat Healthy

- Make healthy food choices
  - Avoid foods that are high in calories, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and salt.
  - Choose non-starchy vegetables and fruit, non-processed foods, low-fat or skim milk and cheese.
  - Get more fiber with foods like whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice and pasta.
  - Drink eight 8 oz. glasses of water every day instead of juice and soda.
- Watch your portion size
  - Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, one quarter with lean protein, like beans or skinless chicken, and one quarter whole grain, like brown rice.
- Eat regular meals and healthy snacks
  - Snack on fruits and nuts, like almonds and walnuts.



### Be Active

- Exercise five days a week
  - Aim to exercise – even just walking – at least 30 minutes per day.
  - Start slowly by taking 10-minute walks, three times per day.
- Add muscle-building exercises
  - Use stretch bands, practice yoga, do pushups or lift hand weights two to three days per week.
  - Doing tasks like regular, heavy gardening can also help you get stronger.
- Stay at a healthy weight by planning out your meals and moving more.



## Monitor Your Health

- Know your diabetes ABCs
  - A is for A1C, the blood test that measures your average blood sugar level over the past three months. You need to know your blood sugar level over time to avoid damage to your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, feet and eyes.
  - The ideal A1C level is below 7.
  - B is for blood pressure, the force of your blood against the wall of your blood vessels. If your blood pressure is too high, your heart will work too hard and you could have a heart attack, stroke or damage your kidneys and eyes. The ideal blood pressure level for most people is below 140/90.
  - Ask your doctor what your goal should be.
  - C is for cholesterol. There are two kinds of cholesterol: LDL and HDL. LDL or “bad” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels, which could lead to a heart attack or stroke. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps to remove the LDL cholesterol from you blood vessels. Talk to your doctor about what your goal cholesterol levels should be and if you need a statin drug to help you reach those goals.
- Check your blood sugar levels
  - Track and record your blood sugars at least one or more times per day.
  - Check your levels before meals, two hours after a meal, at bedtime or based on your doctor’s recommendation.
  - Talk to your doctor about your blood sugar goals.



## Take Your Medication

- Take your medications in the right amount, at the right time and in the right way.
- Understand your medications work to help control your diabetes.
- Keep a medication record to help you develop good medication-taking habits if you are new to taking medications on a regular basis.



## Reduce Stress

- Seek help as you work to improve your health
  - Get support from family, friends and providers on your diabetes team.
  - Set realistic health goals and work toward them.
  - Remember: you are not alone!
- Learn ways to cope with stress to manage blood sugar levels
  - Practice deep breathing and meditating.
  - Doing hobbies like gardening, walking and listening to music can also help you reduce stress.



## Learn to Problem Solve

- Learn how to solve problems to better manage your diabetes and overall health
  - Approach one problem at a time.
  - Explore what might be causing the problem.
  - Turn to your diabetes team to help you develop your “what to do if” plan.
- Manage the frequent problem of high or low blood sugar
  - Look at different causes that could affect your blood pressure.
  - Learn to recognize symptoms, especially those of low blood sugar.
  - Always be prepared to treat low blood sugar.
  - Learn to prevent both high and low blood pressure.



## Reduce Your Risk

- Stop smoking
- See your doctor for regular checkups and tests
  - Get your A1C twice per year, or more often if your level is higher than 7.
  - Have a cholesterol test, foot exam, dental exam, dilated eye exam, urine and blood test to check for kidney problems every year.
  - Get the flu vaccine every year.
  - Get your blood pressure and weight measured at each office visit.