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Strategies to Control Diabetes

If you've just been diagnosed with diabetes, you can still enjoy doing the things you love while taking care of yourself.

Get Informed

Your first step after being diagnosed is to ask questions and learn as much as you can about:

- What changes you can make to take care of yourself
- What medical treatments you need

Your doctor is your main resource for getting information about the care you need to live well with diabetes. Your treatment may include:

- **Medicines.** Whether you need medication to help treat your diabetes depends on your symptoms, complications, blood sugar, and other issues.
- **Lifestyle changes.** These may include changing your diet, losing extra weight, and becoming more active.
- **Monitoring your blood sugar.** Your doctor can teach you how to keep track and show you what to do to avoid highs and lows.



Track Your ABCs

Diabetes makes you more likely to get conditions that may affect your eyes, nerves, heart, teeth, and more. This is why you want to watch your diabetes ABCs.

- **"A" stands for A1c.** This test measures your average blood sugar over the past 2 or 3 months. Your goal is to keep your A1c around 7% or less without risking low blood sugar. Your doctor can help.

- **"B" stands for blood pressure.** If you have diabetes, you are more likely to get high blood pressure, which can lead to other serious conditions. Get your numbers checked two to four times a year.
- **"C" stands for cholesterol.** Having diabetes can also put you at risk for high cholesterol, which makes heart disease and strokes more likely. Get it checked at least once every year.

Take Steps to Manage Your Diabetes

Once you know more about living with diabetes, you're ready to put that knowledge into practice. A healthy lifestyle includes:



- ✓ Seeing your doctor two to four times a year
- ✓ Eating a balanced diet
- ✓ Exercising at least 30 minutes everyday
- ✓ Reaching and keeping a healthy weight
- ✓ Seeing your dentist at least twice a year
- ✓ Not smoking
- ✓ Getting eye and foot exams every year

Stop Diabetes Complications Before They Start

It's important to know the signs of some common complications:

- **Nerve damage** (called diabetic neuropathy) often affects the feet and legs. Symptoms include numbness, tingling, burning, cuts or sores that heal very slowly.
- **Eye problems** (called diabetic retinopathy) can result from damage to small blood vessels in the retina. Symptoms include sudden vision loss, blurry vision, eye pain or pressure, and spots before the eyes.
- **Kidney damage** (called diabetic nephropathy) is a diabetes complication that can lead to dialysis or a kidney transplant. To rule out kidney damage, have your doctor check your blood pressure two to four times a year and your urine protein (microalbumin) at least once a year.
- **Heart disease and strokes** are more likely if you have diabetes. The risks go up even higher if you smoke, are overweight, have high blood pressure, or have a family history of heart disease. Talk to your doctor about your risks for heart disease or stroke.