



## MANAGING DIABETES

### NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND BENEFITS CAN MAKE IT EASIER

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**Y**our body takes care of countless tasks for you. You might not notice all it's doing to keep you healthy until something goes wrong.

Diabetes is a serious disease that happens when your body has trouble managing and using blood glucose, a sugar that your body uses as fuel. When you have diabetes, you must actively take on this process yourself. New technologies are being tested to make it easier for you to control diabetes and to help you stay healthy.

More than 100 million Americans are living with diabetes or prediabetes, a condition where blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered diabetes. People with diabetes must frequently check their blood glucose (or blood sugar) and take quick action if it gets too high or low. They must also constantly consider how all meals, physical activity, and things like stress will affect their blood glucose.

#### TYPES OF DIABETES

How people with diabetes manage their blood glucose levels depends, in part, on the type of diabetes they have. The most common are type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes.

With type 1 diabetes, your body doesn't make enough of a hormone called insulin. Insulin signals the body's cells to let glucose inside. The body can't produce enough insulin because the immune system, your body's defense against germs and foreign substances, mistakenly attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common. It occurs when either your body's cells have trouble using insulin or your body doesn't produce enough insulin to handle the glucose in your blood.

Both types can develop at any age. Type 1 is most often diagnosed in children and young adults, while type 2 shows

up most in middle-age and older people. Gestational diabetes occurs only during pregnancy, but increases your chances of developing type 2 later in life.

Diabetes symptoms can vary by type. Some shared symptoms include increased thirst, hunger, and urination. Symptoms of type 1 can start quickly, over a few weeks. Type 2 symptoms tend to develop slowly over years, making them less noticeable.

#### BLOOD GLUCOSE CONTROL

Many people with diabetes check their blood glucose with a blood glucose meter. This portable machine measures how much glucose is in the blood. You get a drop of blood by pricking the side of your fingertip with a small, specialized needle. Then you apply the blood to a test strip. The meter shows you how much glucose is in your blood at that moment.

People with type 1 diabetes, and some people with type 2, correct and manage their blood glucose with injections of synthetic insulin. A missed, or miscalculated, dose can lead to serious complications, immediately and over time. Diabetes increases your risk for blindness, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and amputation.

"It's a significant burden to self-test sugar levels several times a day, count carbohydrates with each meal, take into account the impact of physical activity, and then calculate the amount of insulin you need to inject multiple times a day with a syringe or the help of an insulin pump," explains Dr. Guillermo Arreaza-Rubín, who heads NIH's Diabetes Technology Program. Any error in this management may lead to life-threatening complications like severe hypoglycemia, which is very low blood glucose.

"Hypoglycemia is one of the main reasons people with type 1 visit hospital emergency rooms every day," Arreaza-Rubín

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Diabetes Care Program through CVS Caremark and its partner, Livongo, to help medication adherence, A1C control and lifestyle management.

says. "It happens more frequently during the night and is a major cause of fear and anxiety among people with diabetes and their families."

## HELP FROM TECHNOLOGY

New in 2019, MHBP health offers a free program to its enrollees called Transform Diabetes Care Program through CVS Caremark and its partner, Livongo, to help medication adherence, A1C control and lifestyle management. Transform Diabetes Care is a health benefit that combines advanced technology with coaching to support chronic health conditions like diabetes. It is available at no cost to members as part of MHBP's prescription benefit plan.

Participating in MHBP's Transform Diabetes Care Program gives you all this at no cost:

- An advanced, connected blood glucose meter
- Unlimited strips and lancets shipped to your door
- Personalized tips with each blood glucose check as well as real-time support
- Optional family alerts keep everyone in the loop
- Real-time support when you're out of range
- Your meter can send data directly to your doctor
- Strip reordering, right from your meter
- Automatic uploads mean no more paper logbooks

The connected blood glucose meter offered through MHBP's Transform Diabetes Care Programs provides personalized tips after each reading to support your diabetes management. From creating logs for your doctor's appointments, to alerting loved ones when your blood glucose is out of range, the connected blood glucose meter can upload and send alerts in real-time using a cellular connection if you choose. The connected meter will also automatically detect the wireless network that you are in and 'roam' if necessary. There is no charge to you for roaming or wireless connections.

Every time you test your blood glucose levels with the connected glucose meter your numbers will be automatically sent to a secure online account. With this program, you can easily:

- Track your levels, see trends and share your data with whomever you choose
- Get unlimited test strips and lancets delivered to your door at no out-of-pocket cost
- Receive personalized tips in real-time to help you stay on track and make informed choices

You know yourself better than anyone, but if you ever have a blood glucose reading that's out of range—or just want some quick tips on diabetes management—your meter will



<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/12/managing-diabetes>

offer instant tips after each check. It can also help you contact Certified Diabetes Educators when you want to dig a little deeper.

## MHBP DIABETES MANAGEMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

MHBP offers a wellness incentive program for members with diabetes. The program will reward members with a \$75 credit toward your calendar year deductible in 2020. To be eligible, MHBP must be your primary payor for health

benefits and you must:

- Obtain all of the following medical services during 2019 to monitor your diabetes:
  - routine physical examination
  - hemoglobin A1C blood test
  - LDL test
  - dilated retinal eye exam
- Maintain diabetic medication compliance throughout 2019
- Continue your MHBP enrollment for 2020

For more information on this incentive program, please visit [MHBP.com](http://MHBP.com) or contact us at 800-410-7778 for Standard Option and Value Plan or call 800-694-9901 for Consumer Option.

## 4 STEPS TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES FOR LIFE

Each year, 1.7 million Americans, ages 20 and up, are diagnosed with diabetes. People with diabetes have high levels of blood glucose. If left undiagnosed or untreated, diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, and other health problems. That's why it's important to manage your diabetes ABCs: A1C (blood glucose), blood pressure, and cholesterol. The 4 steps below are a good start.

**Step 1:** Learn about diabetes. If you've got diabetes, you need to make healthy food choices, move more every day, stay at a healthy weight, and take recommended medicines even when you feel good.

**Step 2:** Talk to your health care team about how to manage your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Know your ABC goals, and track your progress.

**Step 3:** Learn how to live with diabetes. Even if you know the steps you should take to stay healthy, you may have trouble sticking with these steps over time. Work with your health care team to make a plan that will work for you.

**Step 4:** Get routine care to stay healthy. See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early. Once each year, be sure to get a dilated eye exam and a complete foot exam.