

# 10 ways to manage diabetes

High blood glucose (sugar) levels can lead to complications (health problems).

These complications affect your eyes, kidneys, feet, blood vessels, nerves, heart, teeth and gums. The following ways can help you to manage your diabetes and stay healthy.

## 1. Find out all you can about diabetes

Diabetes management is in your hands, however there are a lot of people to help you with your diabetes. Your health worker can help you and point you in the right direction. Make sure you make and keep appointments with your doctor and other health professionals.

## 2. Eat healthy foods

These should be low fat, high fibre and low in added sugar. Include vegetables, fruit, wholegrain breads and cereals. Also eat some low fat dairy products and lean meat. Drink lots of water.

## 3. Be active every day

Try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. Ride a bike, play with the kids, walk and have a yarn with your friends. You can do three lots of 10 minutes a day if that is easier.

| Who you might need to see      | What they can do for you  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Doctor                         | Check your health, order tests, give you scripts  |
| Dietitian                      | Help you to learn about good tucker   |
| Diabetes Educator              | Help you to learn about diabetes and how to manage it   |
| Podiatrist                     | Check your feet and show you how to look after them   |
| Optometrist or Ophthalmologist | Check your eyes   |
| Specialists                    | If you are having troubles with your diabetes or need extra help with your kidneys, eyes, heart, feet or blood pressure |

## 4. Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor

These help your body to keep your blood glucose levels (BGL) in target range. Your medications may be either tablets or insulin injections. You might need blood pressure or cholesterol tablets as well.



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## 5. Check your blood glucose levels (BGL)

Check them yourself or ask your health worker to check them as often as you can. Checking your own blood glucose level (BGL) can help you to make good choices with eating and exercising, as well as showing you what else can change your BGL. Make sure you have an NDSS card to get cheaper prices on your test strips. NDSS registration is free and organised by your GP or Credentialed Diabetes Educator.

### BGL target range

- 6-8 mmol/L before meals
- 6-10 mmol/L two hours after meals

### What can change your BGL

- food
- activity
- medications
- illness/pain/infection
- stress/worry
- drugs/alcohol

| Test                      | What it checks                              | How often it is done |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
| HbA1c (blood test)        | Your average BGL over the previous 3 months | Every 3–6 months     |
| Cholesterol (blood test)  | Blood fat levels                            | At least once a year |
| Microalbumin (urine test) | Early test for kidney problems              | At least once a year |

## 6. Check your feet every day

You can stop foot problems by checking your feet on the top, bottom and between your toes. Look for dryness, blisters, hard areas of skin, redness, swelling, cuts, bites or pus. If you can't see or reach your feet, ask someone else to check them or use a mirror. Shake out your shoes before putting them on and don't go barefoot.

Tell your health worker if you have problems with your feet.

## 7. If you smoke: STOP

Smoking worsens the complications of diabetes and every cigarette is causing you damage. Speak with your health worker, doctor or call the Quitline on 137 848 for help and advice.

## 8. Have regular blood tests

Your doctor, diabetes educator or health worker will tell you about tests for your diabetes.

## 9. Have your blood pressure checked

Many people with diabetes have blood pressure problems. This can be checked when you see your health worker, educator or doctor, or at least every six months. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Blood pressure should be less than 130/80. For people with kidney disease the target is 125/75.

## 10. Have your eyes checked

Have a special eye test when you first find out about your diabetes. An optometrist can do this test. This test should be done at least every one to two years, more often if there are problems in the eye.



**“Hands on Country”**  
This painting was created for Australian Diabetes Council by artist Chris Tobin, a Dharug man, and a traditional custodian in the Blue Mountains region. In the artist's words: “The central part of this painting represents the relationship of the clan – it's a unity of people looking out for each other while living independent lives.”

Need more information?  
Call our customer care line on

**1300DIABETES**  
1300 342 238



Diabetes Australia – New South Wales  
t/a Australian Diabetes Council

ABN 84 001 363 766 CHARITY NO. CFN12458

STREET ADDRESS  
26 Arundel Street  
Glebe NSW 2037

POSTAL ADDRESS  
GPO Box 9824  
Sydney NSW 2001

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CUSTOMER CARE LINE  
1300 DIABETES  
1300 342 238  
FAX  
+61 2 9660 3633  
australiandiabetescouncil.com

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voice*  
FOR DIABETES