

Looking after your type 2 diabetes

Smart steps



AUSTRALIAN
DIABETES
EDUCATORS
ASSOCIATION



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The Australian Diabetes Educators Association is Australia's leading organisation for health professionals providing diabetes education and care.

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Staying well



While the treatments for type 2 diabetes might vary, one thing stays the same – you play a big part in managing your diabetes and improving your health.

Your key to better health

Perhaps you've recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, or have had it for a while. While the treatments for type 2 diabetes might vary, one thing stays the same – you play a big part in managing your diabetes and improving your health.

Some health problems disappear after treatment. But type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition that continues throughout your life. This doesn't mean you can't have a normal active life like everyone else. But it does mean taking extra care to keep your type 2 diabetes under control.

The good news is that it's easier to stay well when you work with a diabetes team that includes your doctor and other health care professionals who can help. You're a very important member of this team too – after all, you're the one in charge of your day-to-day care.

Taking responsibility for diabetes self management might seem overwhelming at first but, with the help of your team, you'll soon become an expert. The key to feeling confident is learning more about your condition and how to care for yourself by:

- Following some simple steps to get started
- Talking to a Credentialed Diabetes Educator – he or she can help you understand and manage your condition and make informed choices about food, exercise and treatment.

Who are Credentialed Diabetes Educators?

Qualified health care professionals (e.g. Registered Nurses, Accredited Practising Dietitians, Podiatrists and Accredited Pharmacists) who have been specially trained in diabetes education and care.

Looking after your type 2 diabetes

There are important steps you can take to improve your wellbeing. Understanding how each of them helps keep you healthy makes it easier to fit them into your life. A Credentialed Diabetes Educator can help you set goals that make it easier to adopt new habits – and reduce the risk of diabetes complications.

- 1** Follow a healthy eating plan
- 2** Stay active
- 3** Monitor your blood glucose
- 4** Take your medicine
- 5** Learn more about your condition
- 6** Look after your emotional wellbeing
- 7** Take action to stay healthy



Follow a healthy eating plan



Enjoying food and sharing it with others is an important part of our lives. Diabetes needn't change this – you don't need to eat special foods.



Choosing healthy food will help to control

- Blood glucose levels
- Blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides).
- Blood pressure
- Weight (or help you to lose weight if you need to)

How do I choose the right food?

- Get to know which carbohydrates and fats are the healthiest
- Learn how to make your favourite meals healthier
- Know the healthiest menu choices when you eat out
- Learn how to read food labels

An Accredited Practising Dietitian can help you with a realistic eating plan that fits in with your life. A Credentialed Diabetes Educator can help with general advice on diet and how to balance your diabetes medicines with what you eat.

Simple ways to eat healthier

- Eat wholegrain cereals
- Eat vegetables and fruit
- Include legumes – like chickpeas, lentils and beans
- Choose low fat dairy products
- Choose lean protein foods – fish, skinless poultry and lean meat
- Use small amounts of healthy fat (e.g. olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil)
- Eat a little avocado, nuts and seeds
- Keep saturated fats (from meat, full fat dairy products, fast food and some manufactured biscuits and cakes) to a minimum



Stay active



Being physically active is important – it helps control blood glucose levels. But the benefits don't stop there.



Regular exercise

- Helps to control your blood glucose levels
- Helps to control your weight – and makes you look and feel better
- Improves your fitness – so you can do more
- Reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke
- Helps keep cholesterol and blood pressure healthy
- Keeps bones strong and improves your balance
- Makes you feel good and can help reduce symptoms of depression
- Reduces stress
- Helps you sleep better

Talk to your diabetes team about

- How to get started – getting an exercise habit starts with small steps
 - How to fit exercise into your day
 - Exercising safely
 - How much exercise you need – and what kind
 - When not to exercise
 - How to balance food, medicines and physical activity

What if I have arthritis or other problems that make exercise difficult?

See your GP before starting to exercise if you have any other medical conditions. An Accredited Exercise Physiologist or physiotherapist can design an exercise program that works for you.

Easy ways to move more

- Always walk up escalators
- Use stairs not the lift
- Get together with a friend for regular walks
- Go window shopping
- Look for active ways to have fun – dancing, cycling, swimming, golf, gardening, kayaking
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Buy a pedometer to see how many steps you do each day – try and increase the number of steps you do
- Get up and walk around while you're on the phone

Monitor your blood glucose

Once you get used to it, monitoring is a good way to get more in tune with your blood glucose levels.



Your doctor or Credentialed Diabetes Educator can help you plan a monitoring routine and help you work out what blood glucose range to aim for.

Checking your blood glucose levels with a blood glucose meter can help you manage your diabetes. This is called self monitoring blood glucose (monitoring for short). Although it's important for your doctor to check your blood glucose levels regularly, your monitoring:

- Tells you what your blood glucose levels are rather than just relying on how you feel
- Helps you learn how food, physical activity and medicines affect your blood glucose levels
- Provides you with information to help you make decisions about your diabetes management
- Can tip you off early if your blood glucose levels get out of the target range, and help you and your doctor decide if any changes to your diabetes tablets or insulin are needed

Important things to remember about monitoring

- Don't blame yourself if blood glucose levels get out of the target range – it's just another problem that you can solve with the help of your doctor or Credentialed Diabetes Educator
- Sometimes raised blood glucose levels mean you need a change of medicines – again working with your diabetes team can help decide this.

If you're monitoring, important things to know are

- Correct technique – am I doing it accurately?
 - What targets am I aiming for?
 - What is the best monitoring schedule for me?
 - What do the results mean?
 - What do I do if my blood glucose levels are too low or too high?
 - Where do I get my monitoring supplies (test strips and lancets)?
 - What levels mean I should see my diabetes care team?

What is the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS)?

The NDSS is an initiative of the Australian Government and is administered by Diabetes Australia. Registration is free and open to all Australians diagnosed with diabetes. Your doctor or Credentialed Diabetes Educator can authorise your NDSS registration. This registration lets you buy blood glucose monitoring strips and other products that you might need to manage your diabetes at subsidised prices. To find out more, talk to your Credentialed Diabetes Educator, visit www.ndss.com.au or phone Diabetes Australia in your State or Territory on 1300 136 588 at the cost of a local call.

Take your medicines



Your Credentialed Diabetes Educator can answer your questions about medicines and help you with any problems you may have.

Blood glucose levels can be controlled with different medicines, depending on how long you have had type 2 diabetes and what stage it's at.



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People with type 2 diabetes may not need diabetes tablets at first, but may need them later on. Many will eventually need insulin. This isn't because your diabetes has gotten worse or you haven't done a good job with lifestyle changes – it's just what can happen with type 2 diabetes.

As well as medicines to lower blood glucose levels, people with diabetes may need other medicines to treat problems that often go hand in hand with diabetes, like high blood pressure and high blood fats.

Taking medicines (tablets or insulin) as your doctor prescribes is important but people often don't. Some common reasons are:

- They think the medicine isn't working or isn't making a difference
- They experience side effects
- They feel better and think they no longer need them
- They forget
- The cost of the medicine puts them off

Whatever medicines you take, always ask these questions

- Why am I taking this?
- What effect does it have?
- How does it work?
- When should I take it and how long should I take it for?
- Are there side effects?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?
- What do I do when I'm sick?

If you use insulin, you also need to know

- How do I inject?
- Where do I inject?
- How do I store my insulin?
- Where do I get my syringes or pen needles?
- What is the name of my insulin and how does it work?
- What is the recommended time to inject?
- How do I adjust my doses when I'm sick, if I don't feel like eating or when I'm exercising?

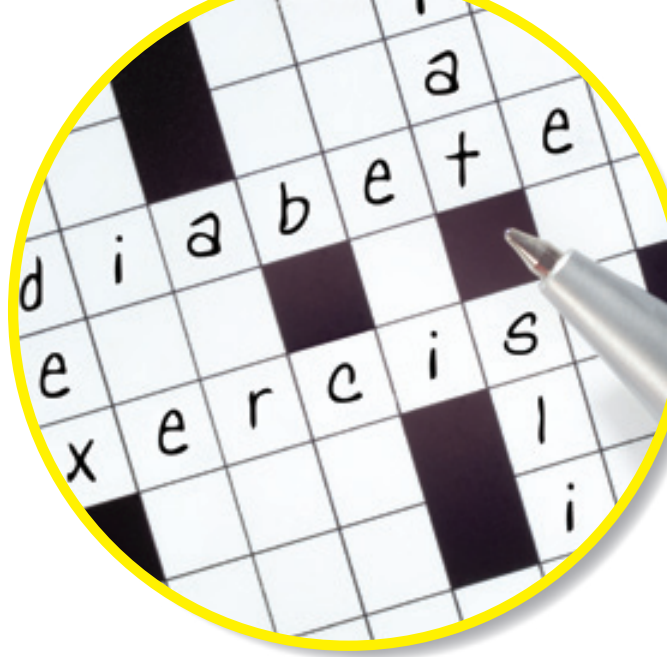
Your Credentialed Diabetes Educator can answer your questions about medicines and help you with any problems you may have.

Don't forget to talk to your doctor if you think you are experiencing side effects from your medicines. You can also talk to a pharmacist about medicines. Some pharmacists are accredited to look at what medicines you take and see if any changes would help. Your general practitioner can arrange this if they think this would be useful.

Learn more about diabetes



The key
to feeling
confident
is learning
more about
diabetes.



The more you know about diabetes, and the more familiar you are with your blood glucose levels, the easier it is to tackle problems like high or low blood glucose levels, or situations that can disrupt your routine – like sick days or holidays.

By working with your Credentialed Diabetes Educator, you can find ways to cope with common problems – that way you're always prepared. Things to ask include

- How do I recognise high / low blood glucose levels?
- What do I do about high / low blood glucose levels?
- How do food and exercise affect my blood glucose levels?
- How do I manage my diabetes when I am sick?
- What do I do when I am on holidays?
- What if I do shift work?
- How do I manage special events, like birthdays or other celebrations?
- What if I am travelling across time zones?
- What if I'm travelling and find it hard to get healthy food?

Looking after your emotional wellbeing

Living with a chronic condition can affect you emotionally – not just physically.



Living with a chronic condition can affect you emotionally – not just physically. It's normal to sometimes feel depressed, anxious, angry or discouraged when you live with a chronic illness. But feeling down for a long time can make it harder to stay on top of your diabetes self management.

- Be kind to yourself – everyone gets off track with their diabetes management sometimes
- Learn ways to cope with low moods – your Credentialed Diabetes Educator can help you
- Having support from friends and family helps too. Stay in touch with people, nurture your relationships
 - Talk to other people with diabetes – ask your Credentialed Diabetes Educator about diabetes support groups and websites that put people with diabetes in touch with each other
 - Ask your doctor to refer you to a psychologist or a counsellor trained to provide psychological support if you feel depressed and need extra help.
- Phone Diabetes Australia in your State or Territory on 1300 136 588 for the cost of a local call to find out about diabetes support groups in your area. You can also get support by visiting www.diabetescounselling.com.au.

Take action

Diabetes can
be controlled
and the risk of
complications
can be reduced



Most people with diabetes know about diabetes complications. But don't forget the good news – diabetes can be controlled and the risk of these complications can be reduced.

You can play an active part in preventing problems by

- Learning about diabetes self management
- Monitoring your blood glucose levels
- Working with your diabetes team
- Keeping up to date with doctors' appointments and other health checks

Some need to see a diabetes specialist, but all people with type 2 diabetes need a general practitioner. Find a general practitioner you feel comfortable with – then stick with them (don't doctor shop). See them regularly. Ask when your next appointment should be. Should you make the next appointment now or will they contact you for your next appointment?

Many general practitioners put their diabetes patients on a diabetes register and send reminders when they're due for their next check. Ask your general practitioner if this applies to you.

Ask your general practitioner about checks for your eyes and feet, as well as the regular blood tests that you have.

Ask what the results of your regular blood tests are – are they in the target range? If not, what can be done about it?

Keep a record of

- The checks you need and how often you need them
- What your blood glucose targets are and how your results match them
- Results from all your tests

Take this record with you on all your health visits. It will give your diabetes team valuable information about your condition and how they can best help you.

Quitting smoking

Giving up smoking is particularly important if you have diabetes. For help to quit, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, call the Quitline number, 137848, or go to www.quit.org.au

Take action

What about diabetes complications?

Your doctor will order tests to monitor your diabetes and check for complications regularly. Your Credentialed Diabetes Educator can help you learn how to reduce the risks of diabetes complications. Treatment can slow the progression of diabetes complications (it's better to be aware of any problems so that something can be done, rather than sticking your head in the sand).

What if I want to have a baby?

Women with type 2 diabetes can have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby, but it involves some careful planning. It is recommended that you keep your blood glucose levels in the normal range before and during pregnancy. It is also very important to have frequent checkups with your doctor and Credentialed Diabetes Educator before, during and immediately after pregnancy. Ask your doctor or Credentialed Diabetes Educator about how you can best plan your pregnancy.



My checklist

Look at each section in this booklet and use the checklist below to decide where you'd like to know more or need help to make changes

Smart steps for getting started	I'm confident that I know about this and am doing well		I want to know more about this and need help to make some changes	
Follow a healthy eating plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stay active	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Monitor your blood glucose	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Take your medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Learn more about diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Look after your emotional health	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Take action to stay healthy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Take this completed list with you to your next appointment with your doctor, Credentialed Diabetes Educator or other member of your diabetes team.

Your diabetes care team

Diabetes can affect your health in a number of ways, so there may be times when you need to call on different health care professionals. Besides your doctor, there are:

Credentialed Diabetes Educators – health care professionals who have completed advanced study in diabetes care. They work in diabetes centres in hospitals, in community health centres, in general practice or in private practice. Services in public hospitals or community health centres are usually free. Credentialed Diabetes Educators in private practice charge a consultation fee, but some private health funds offer a rebate. If your general practitioner refers you to a Credentialed Diabetes Educator, you may be able to claim a rebate from Medicare or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. You can check with your general practitioner if you are eligible.

General Practitioner – to care for your diabetes and all your other health needs

Practice Nurse – to help you get started and assist in the coordination of your care

Endocrinologists – diabetes specialist doctor for your diabetes

Ophthalmologists and optometrists – to care for your eyes

Podiatrists – to care for your feet

Accredited Practising Dietitians – to help with a healthy eating plan

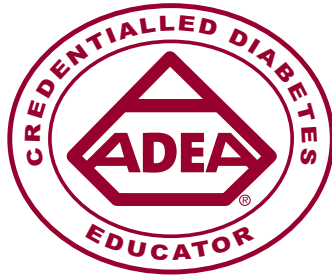
Accredited Exercise Physiologists and physiotherapists – to help with exercise and physical activity

Psychologists or social workers – for extra help to cope with living with diabetes, or life stresses

These health care professionals can provide Medicare rebated services if you have a referral from your doctor. Exceptions are optometrists (you don't need a referral for a rebate). You can see a social worker in a hospital or community health centre.

To find a Credentialed Diabetes Educator (CDE), please visit the Australian Diabetes Educators Association at www.adea.com.au and use our search function by clicking on 'Find a CDE'.





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