



COMMON STEPS FOR MANAGING DIABETES

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It is estimated by the CDC that over 34 million Americans have diabetes, and over the last 20 years, the number of U.S. adults diagnosed with diabetes has doubled due to increasing obesity, inactivity, and an aging population. Learn about the common steps to managing diabetes and how to live well with this diagnosis.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects the body's ability to produce or use insulin. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that regulates glucose (sugar from the foods you eat). The pancreas helps regulate how much insulin is needed in your body and is released to help absorb the glucose. Three main types of diabetes are Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes.

TYPE 1 DIABETES

The exact cause of Type 1 diabetes is unknown, but it is thought to be caused by an autoimmune response where the pancreas is attacked by its own immune system. This results in little-to-no insulin being made and leads to dramatically elevated blood sugar levels. Type 1 diabetes is less common (5-10% of diagnosed cases) and cannot be prevented.

Risk factors include:

- › Younger age: Type 1 diabetes is more often diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults.
- › Family history of Type 1 diabetes.

TYPE 2 DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, affecting 90–95% of diabetics. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body's cells become resistant to insulin, so the body is not able to use insulin properly. Large amounts of insulin are produced but it results in little effect on glucose. Type 2 diabetes usually develops over several years, and it can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes such as losing weight, eating healthy foods, and being active.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- › Family history
- › History of prediabetes (higher-than-normal blood sugar levels)
- › Being overweight or obese
- › Age 45 years or older
- › Sedentary lifestyle
- › History of gestational diabetes

GESTATIONAL DIABETES

Gestational diabetes occurs in pregnant women who have not previously been diagnosed with diabetes. Women diagnosed with gestational diabetes are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later on. During pregnancy, the placenta produces hormones to support the pregnancy, but sometimes, these hormones can block the use of insulin in the mother's body, leading to insulin resistance. Gestational diabetes can also occur if the mother's body is unable to produce enough insulin

Risk factors include:

- › History of gestational diabetes
- › History of giving birth to a baby greater than 9 lbs.
- › Being overweight or obese
- › Age 25 years or older
- › Family history of type 2 diabetes
- › History of polycystic ovary syndrome
- › Race—including African American, Hispanic/Latino American, or Alaskan Native

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES?

Symptoms of diabetes can vary from person to person and can include increased thirst and/or hunger, frequent urination, fatigue, blurry vision,

and unexplained weight loss. People with a new onset of type 1 diabetes may develop symptoms more rapidly as their body's blood glucose levels can rise more rapidly. Gestational diabetes is usually diagnosed during routine OB appointments so symptoms may not be present, or they may be hard to distinguish from other symptoms of pregnancy. So if you are diagnosed with diabetes, what can you do to manage it?

EAT WELL

Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet is important for everyone and especially when you are living with diabetes. The glycemic index is a set of values assigned to foods based on how rapidly they raise blood sugar levels. The values range from 0 to 100, and 55 or less is considered low on the glycemic index. Concentrate on eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and foods low on the glycemic index to avoid spikes and dips in blood sugar levels.

Medcor's Guiding Health Principle Eat Real Food encourages you to focus on healthy and nutritious food that hasn't been overly processed or filled with sugar. If you have developed Type 2 diabetes through years of bad habits, changing the way you eat is challenging. Make a commitment to yourself and ask for support from your diabetes management team if you feel discouraged.

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Exercising regularly to maintain a healthy weight is one of the best things you can do for your overall health, especially if you've been diagnosed with diabetes. Both diet and exercise should be considered in every weight loss or maintenance plan because you need the right foods to give you enough energy to work out. You also need to bring a snack to your workout in case your blood sugar dips low while engaging in activity.

An effective exercise routine includes both aerobic exercise and strength training, but start with what you can handle, even if that is a 20-minute walk. Get used to Medcor's Guiding Health Principle of

Moving Your Body for 30 minutes every day. This isn't about completing an intense workout every day but creating the habit of being more active and engaging in activities you enjoy and will do consistently.

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

Monitoring your blood sugar closely can help your healthcare provider track and trend your data to ensure optimal control of your blood sugar levels. Watching what you eat and monitoring your blood sugar will go hand-in-hand to help you learn the right foods to eat and how certain foods affect your blood sugar levels.

Treatment recommendations will be based on the findings of your family and medical history, physical, and lab results. If your healthcare provider diagnoses you with diabetes, you will be given a detailed treatment plan which may include lifestyle changes and medications. There is no cure for diabetes but it is a manageable condition and good habits can go a long way in managing negative symptoms.

References

1. [Diabetes Symptoms, Causes, & Treatment | ADA](#)
2. [4 Steps to Manage Your Diabetes for Life | NIDDK \(nih.gov\)](#)
3. [Manage Blood Sugar | Diabetes | CDC](#)