



Living Well with Diabetes

4 healthy habits that help fight diabetes

If you have diabetes, the lifestyle choices you make every day really matter. When you add them up, they may help you feel better. They may even lower your risk for future health problems from diabetes.

Four habits that can make a big difference:

1. **Follow a meal plan.** Work with a dietitian or nutritionist to come up with an eating plan that works for you. Mercy Care covers the cost for members to see a nutrition specialist. You can ask your primary care provider for a referral.

What's right for you might vary, but in general, try to:

- Choose whole foods like fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains
- Limit added sugars, refined grains and processed foods
- Replace high-fat foods like beef and butter with healthier fats like olive oil and fish

2. **Find a fitness move that's fun.** Take a brisk walk. Work out to a fitness video. Play a sport. Being active most days helps you manage your blood sugar and weight.

3. **Take it easy.** Too much stress can make blood sugar harder to control. When you're feeling stressed, try a soothing activity, like listening to music or taking a bath. Find time for hobbies and other things you enjoy.

4. **If you smoke or vape, ask your doctor for help quitting.** Or call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**. It may take a few tries, but it's one of the best things you can do for your lungs and heart.

Sources: American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org);
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
(www.niddk.nih.gov)



Don't forget!

People with diabetes often have a lower immune system. A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(www.cdc.gov)

Important medical screenings to stay in the target zone!

A1c control

A high A1C is a sign of frequent high blood glucose, which puts you at risk for complications such as nerve damage, kidney disease and vision impairment.

A1c target numbers:

Less than 7 percent for many adults. A1C is specific to each person though. Your doctor may discuss a higher or lower A1C goal.

Urine Albumin-to-Creatinine (UACR) Ratio

A urine test that checks how much protein or albumin is in your urine. Too much is a sign of kidney damage. It should be done once a year if you have type 2 diabetes or have had type 1 diabetes for at least five years.

Target number:

Less than 30 mg/g of urine creatinine.

Blood Pressure

Diabetes raises the risk for high blood pressure, which increases your chances of heart disease, stroke, vision loss and kidney disease.

Target number:

Less than 130/80 mmHg

Body Mass Index (BMI)

A measure of body fat based on your height and weight. Added weight increases your chances of other health problems including prediabetes, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

BMI target numbers:

18.5 to 24.9

Dilated or digital retinal exams

These check the eyes for signs of diabetic retinopathy. Discuss these options with your eye doctor.

Retinal exam target frequency:

Once a year, if you have type 2 diabetes or have had type 1 diabetes for at least five years. Complete at least twice a year if previous testing showed signs of eye disease.



Contact us

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Member Services:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879 (TTY **711**),
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7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ACC-RBHA members with SMI:

602-586-1841 or
1-800-564-5465 (TTY **711**),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour nurse line:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879

Additional contacts:

<https://www.mercycareaz.org/contact-us.html>

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[mercycareaz.org](https://www.mercycareaz.org)

Take these steps to head off chronic kidney disease

Staying on top of your health can help you feel better if you have diabetes. Down the road, it may even help you avoid kidney trouble. You need healthy kidneys to get rid of wastes and extra fluids from your blood. Over time, high blood sugar from diabetes and high blood pressure can harm your kidneys.

Lower your risk of kidney disease:

- Don't use alcohol or tobacco. Ask your doctor about healthy ways to quit.
- Meet your blood sugar and blood pressure goals. Many with diabetes also have high blood pressure. Ask your doctor what your goals should be and what changes might help you meet them.
- Take medicines as prescribed.

Discuss side effects or concerns about medications with your doctor. Also, discuss the use of over-the-counter medications, supplements, or herbs. Some of these can be very harmful to your kidneys.

- See your doctor for checkups and tests. This can help catch kidney disease early when treatment may stop it from getting worse.
- Get an eGFR Test (estimated glomerular filtration rate) at least once a year to estimate kidney function.
- Cut back on salt (sodium). It can boost blood pressure.
- Ask your doctor if you should limit protein.



Sources: American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org);
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
(www.niddk.nih.gov)

Care Management

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.