

LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES: READ THIS IF YOU HAVE DIABETES OR THINK YOU MIGHT BE AT RISK

Diabetes Care



ask the
Expert



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More than 30 million Americans are living with diabetes. At least 1 in 3 will develop diabetes in his or her lifetime. Fortunately, there are ways to avoid common problems and live well with the disease.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that results when the body is not able to use food properly for energy. Diabetes increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. It is a serious medical condition, but you can learn to manage it and avoid complications by taking care of yourself.

What factors increase my risk?

You can't change a family history of diabetes, your age (being older than 45) or your ethnic background. People with African-American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander genes are at higher risk.

But you can control being overweight, being sedentary, having high blood pressure, having high blood cholesterol and developing prediabetes or gestational diabetes.

If I have diabetes, how can I live well?

First, learn all you can about the disease and get support. Know your diabetes ABCs: A is for the A1C test, which measures your average blood glucose over time; B is for blood pressure; and C is for cholesterol. Talk to your healthcare team about how to manage these.

Know how to monitor your blood glucose. Bring your monitor and log book to all medical appointments.

Take any medications as prescribed and talk to your doctor if you have side effects or your blood glucose is consistently too high or low.

Make smart food choices and lose weight, if needed. Be consistent about eating three to five small meals or snacks a day. Reduce fat. Choose healthy carbohydrates, like whole-grain breads. Eat fresh fruits, veggies and beans.

Drink plenty of water.

Exercise and be active. Start where you are and aim for 30 minutes of exercise or activity on most days.

Quit smoking.

Stay motivated. Make use of diabetes education and nutrition services.

Though managing your diabetes isn't always easy, living well is possible—and you're always worth it.



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