

THE POWER TO CONTROL **DIABETES** IS IN **YOUR** HANDS

Information About Diabetes and
Related Medicare Benefits



National Diabetes Education Program

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a serious disease. It means your blood glucose (often called blood sugar) is too high. Your blood always has some glucose in it because your body needs it for energy. But too much glucose in your blood is not good for your health.

Why should I control my diabetes?

If you control your diabetes, it can help you feel better and stay healthy. Keeping your blood glucose close to normal lowers your chances of having heart, eye, kidney, and nerve problems. To control your diabetes, you need to know your blood glucose numbers and your target goals.



Why should I check my blood glucose?

Checking your blood glucose levels will help you control your diabetes. It will also help you and your doctor or health care team to make changes to your treatment plan.

You can check your own blood glucose to see what your levels are. Food, medicines, physical activity, sickness, or stress can affect your levels.



Ask your doctor or health care team about checking your blood glucose levels.

How do I check my blood glucose levels?

You use a blood glucose meter and a lancet (a tool to get a drop of blood) to check your own blood glucose levels. You do not have to go to the doctor's office to do it.

To check your own blood glucose, use a lancet to get a drop of blood. The meter will use the blood to give you a number. This is your blood glucose level.

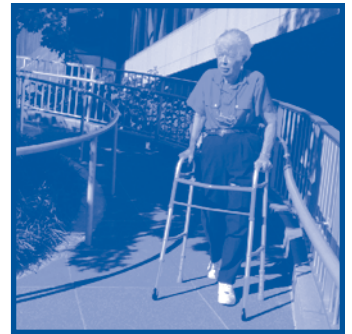
There are many types of meters. Some meters are made for people who have trouble with their eyes. Some take blood samples from the finger or other parts of the body. Each meter works differently. Be sure to read the papers that come with your meter. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, diabetes educator, or other health care team member to show you the right way to use your meter.

Ask your doctor or health care team to teach you how to use your blood glucose meter.

What should my blood glucose levels be?

Set your blood glucose goals with your doctor or health care team. Write down your results, and show them to your health care team.

Ask your doctor or other health care team member what type of blood glucose meter you have. Some meters measure whole blood and others measure plasma values. Your blood glucose goals will depend on the type of meter you have. Most new meters give the results as plasma values. For most people, their levels should be:



Plasma Values	
Before meals	90–130
1–2 hours after meals	below 180

Whole Blood Values	
Before meals	80–120
1–2 hours after meals	below 170



How often should I check my blood glucose?

Your doctor will tell you when and how often you need to check your glucose. It is usually checked before meals, after meals, and sometimes at bedtime. People who take insulin usually need to check their glucose more often.

Talk to your health care team about how often to check your blood glucose.

What should I do with the results when I check my blood glucose levels?

Ask your doctor or health care team to give you a journal or log to keep track of your blood glucose levels. Write down your number each time you check your blood



glucose. Make a note of things that seem to change your glucose levels, such as eating too much or being sick. Use the results in your journal to make changes to your diet and physical activity as needed.

Share your glucose levels with your doctor or health care team. They will help you make a plan for keeping your diabetes under control. Ask your doctor or health care team what to do if your numbers are higher or lower than your goal level. They may suggest changes to your diet, physical activity, or medicines.

Call your doctor if your blood glucose numbers are higher or lower than your goal levels for 2 to 3 days.

What can affect my blood glucose levels?

Things that make blood glucose too HIGH:

- Eating more than usual
- Eating foods high in glucose (sugar)
- Exercising less than usual
- Stress
- Sickness
- Taking certain medicines
- Not taking your diabetes medication

Things that make blood glucose too LOW:

- Eating less than usual or delaying or skipping a meal
- Exercising more than usual
- Taking more insulin than needed
- Taking too much diabetes medication

What other numbers do I need to know to control my diabetes?

People with diabetes are at high risk for a heart attack or stroke. So you need to control your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers, too. Be smart about your heart. Take control of the ABCs of diabetes.

What are the ABCs of diabetes?

A is for the **A1C test**.

The A1C test is a simple lab test that reflects your average blood glucose levels over the past 3 months. It is the best way to know how well your blood glucose is controlled overall. This test used to be called hemoglobin (pronounced he-mo-glo-bin) A-1-C or H-b-A-1-C. You should have this test at least twice a year. **The goal for most people with diabetes is below 7.**

B is for **blood pressure**.

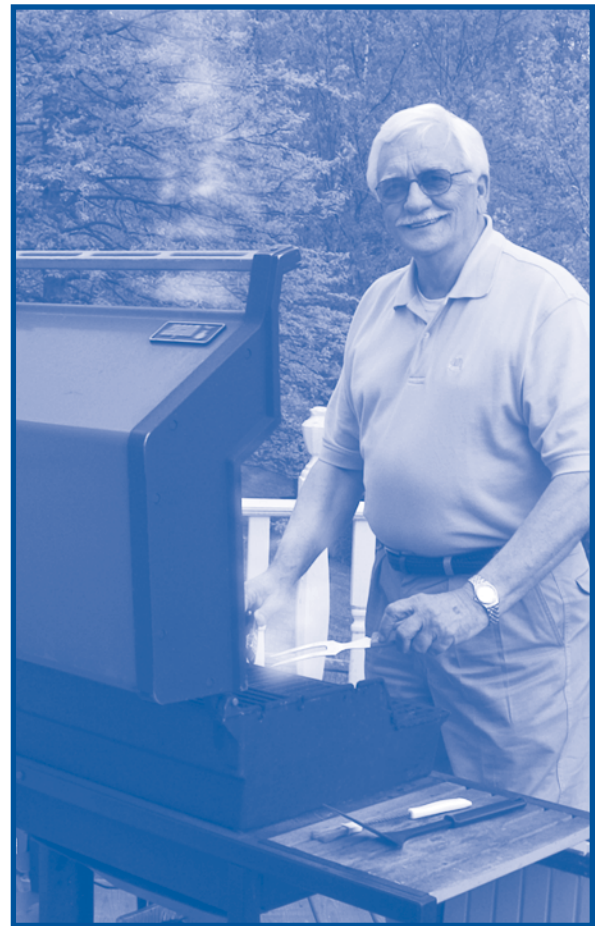
The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 130/80.

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. It can cause a heart attack, stroke, or kidney disease.

C is for **cholesterol**.

The LDL cholesterol goal for most people with diabetes is below 100.

Bad cholesterol, or LDL, can build up and clog your blood vessels. It can cause a heart attack or stroke.



Ask your health care team what your blood glucose goals are before meals, after meals, and at bedtime. Write them down.

What diabetes benefits does Medicare cover?

Medicare helps pay for diabetes self-testing equipment and supplies, including blood glucose meters, test strips, and lancets.

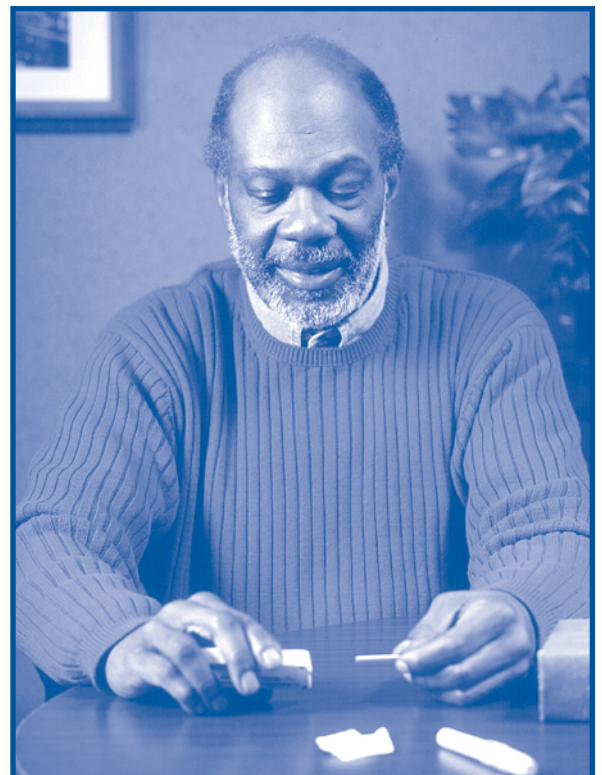
In the Original Medicare Plan, also known as “fee-for-service” Medicare, you only have to pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount after the Part B deductible. If you are in a Medicare health plan, see if there is a copayment. Either way, remember that Medicare pays for part of the cost of your diabetes equipment and supplies.

To get your diabetes equipment and supplies paid for under Medicare, you need a prescription from your doctor. The prescription should say:

- You have diabetes
- How many test strips and lancets you need in a month
- What kind of meter you need (for example, if you need a special meter for vision problems, your doctor should say that and the medical reason why you need it)
- Whether or not you use insulin
- How often you should test your blood glucose

Keep in mind:

- You can pick up your supplies at your pharmacy, hospital, or clinic.
- You can also order supplies from a medical equipment supplier. But YOU must be the one to order them.
- YOU must request refills of diabetes supplies. Do not accept shipments that you did not order.
- You will need a new prescription from your doctor for your lancets and strips every 6 months.





Medicare also covers **diabetes self-management training** and **medical nutrition therapy services**.

Diabetes self-management training helps you learn how to control your diabetes. Your doctor must prescribe this training for you. A diabetes educator will show you how to:

- Manage your blood glucose
- Make good choices about nutrition and physical activity
- Prevent and treat problems from diabetes

Your doctor will give you information about where to get diabetes self-management training. You can check with the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-342-2383 or visit the website at www.diabetes.org/education/edustate2.asp to find a Medicare-approved training program near you.

If you receive blood glucose meters, test strips, or lancets from a supplier without ordering them, Medicare will not pay the cost.

Medical nutrition therapy services help you learn which foods are best to eat and how much food is right for you. Your doctor must prescribe these services for you. A registered dietitian or nutrition professional will provide these services, which include:

- A review of your current eating habits
- How much to eat of what foods
- Tips on how to manage your life and how to make healthy food choices
- Follow-up visits to check how well you are doing with your food choices

Ask your doctor to refer you to a nutrition professional, or contact the American Dietetic Association at 1-800-366-1655 or visit the website at www.eatright.org and click on “Find a Nutrition Professional.”



Other Medicare Benefits

Medicare also helps pay for other services for people with diabetes who have Medicare Part B. You should ask your doctor or other clinician about obtaining these services:

- A1C test
- Dilated eye exam to check for diabetic eye diseases
- Glaucoma screening
- Flu shot and pneumococcal pneumonia shot

Foot care. Medicare also covers foot care if you have nerve damage in either foot due to diabetes. It allows a foot exam every 6 months by a podiatrist or other foot care specialist. You do **not** need a doctor’s prescription for this exam.



Medicare Prescription Drug Plans Begin January 2006

January 1, 2006 marks the beginning of Medicare prescription drug plans. These plans may cover certain diabetes medications. Enrollment in these plans begins November 15, 2005. For answers to your questions about Medicare, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or 1-877-486-2048 for TTY users.

Medicare Now Offers Diabetes Tests for People at Risk for Diabetes

Since January 1, 2005, Medicare Part B covers diabetes screening tests for certain people who are at risk for diabetes. People at risk for diabetes may have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, or a history of high blood glucose. Medicare allows up to two screenings a year. For more information, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or 1-877-486-2048 for TTY users.

Points to Remember

- Ask your doctor or health care team about checking your own blood glucose levels.
- You need a prescription from your doctor to:
 - Get your diabetes equipment and supplies under Medicare;
 - Take diabetes self-management training; and
 - Get medical nutrition therapy services.
- Learn the right way to use your blood glucose meter. Ask your pharmacist, doctor, or another health care team member to help you.
- Write down all of your blood glucose levels. Share them with your doctor or health care team at every visit.
- Ask your doctor about the ABCs of diabetes: A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- Do not accept shipments of diabetes equipment and supplies that you did not order.

Here are some questions you can ask your doctor or health care team:

□ How can I control my diabetes?

□ Should checking my blood glucose be part of my diabetes care plan?

□ How often should I check my blood glucose?

□ What are my ideal blood glucose levels? What levels are too high or too low for me?

□ What should my blood glucose level be before I eat? What should it be about 2 hours after I eat? What should it be before I go to bed?

□ What is the correct way to use my meter?

□ What should I do if my readings are too high or too low?

□ What are my A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol values? What are my goals?

□ Do I qualify for any Medicare benefits such as diabetes self-management training or medical nutrition therapy services?

□ Are there classes to help me learn more about how to control my diabetes?

□ Doctor's name and phone number

For more information about diabetes, contact:

American Association of Diabetes Educators

1-800-TEAM-UP4 (1-800-832-6874)

www.diabeteseducator.org

American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

www.diabetes.org

American Dietetic Association

1-800-366-1655

www.eatright.org

American Heart Association

1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721)

www.americanheart.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1-877-232-3422

www.cdc.gov/diabetes

National Diabetes Education Program

1-800-438-5383

www.ndep.nih.gov

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

301-592-8573

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

1-800-860-8747

www.niddk.nih.gov

National Kidney Disease Education Program

1-866-4-KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639)

www.nkdep.nih.gov

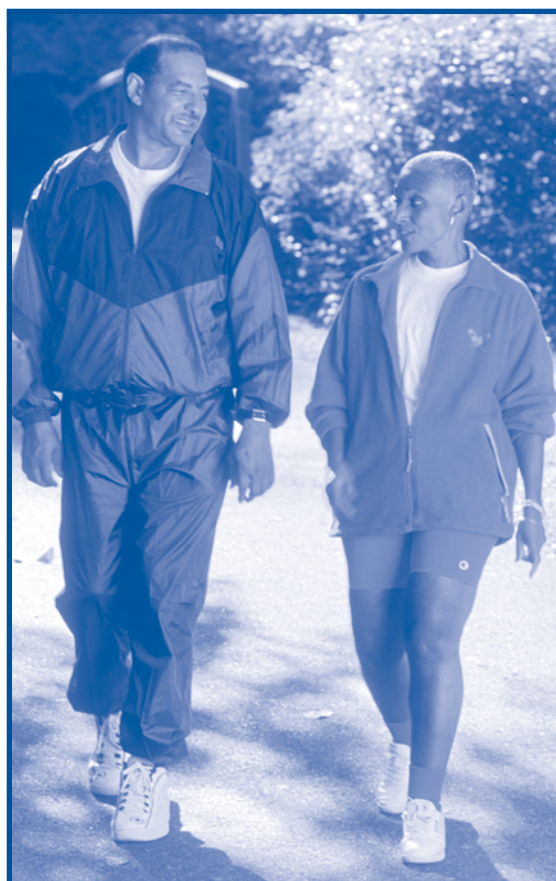
For free information about Medicare's coverage of diabetes screening, supplies, and self-management training, contact:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048 (TTY/TDD)

www.medicare.gov/health/diabetes.asp



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U.S. Department of
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Control your
diabetes.
For Life.



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www.ndep.nih.gov

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