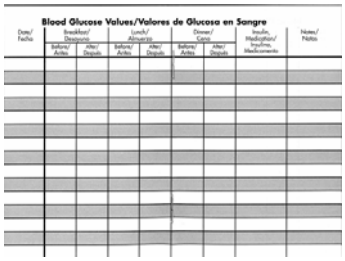
Take Control of Your Diabetes

It is the best thing you can do for yourself. It might be hard sometimes, but it is worth it! In no time at all, you will feel better and have more energy.

Get Started

- **Test your blood sugar.** Ask your doctor when to test and how often.
- **Keep a record** of your blood tests and medicines. Most meters come with a log book. Review the log book with your doctor.


Blood Glucose Values/Valores de Glucosa en Sangre

- **Take your diabetes medicine** as your doctor told you to do.
- **Eat "balanced meals" to control your blood sugar.** Eat lean protein, whole grains, and fruit and "veggies" with each meal. Do not skip meals. Do not wait longer than four or five hours to eat. Try to eat meals at about the same time each day.
- **Get moving!** Start slowly, if you have not been active. Walking after meals is a great start. Do things you enjoy and will stick with.

- **Check your feet** each day for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Call your doctor right away about any sores that do not heal.
- **If you smoke, quit!** Talk to your doctor about ways to quit.
- **Brush your teeth and gums after meals.** Floss daily too.

Keep These Points in Mind

- **Stay at a weight that is good for you.** Ask your doctor how much you should weigh. If you are overweight, a loss of 10 or 15 pounds could improve your blood sugar.
- **Treat low blood sugar right away.** Use diabetes tablets or gel made of glucose. You can also use 4 to 5 lifesavers or 4 ounces of juice or soda (not diet).
- **Learn more about diabetes and diabetes self-care.** Ask your doctor about classes or programs that you can join.
- **Ask for help from family and friends. Join a diabetes support group.** Call your local hospital or ADA to find a support group.

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Work with your Doctor

- **Write down your questions.** Take them with you to each visit.
- **Ask your doctor for your blood sugar goals.**
- **Ask for an A1c test** at least twice a year. Know your test result and what it means.
- **Ask for your blood pressure** to be checked at each visit. Ask your doctor about tests for **cholesterol** and other **blood** tests.
- **Remove your shoes and socks at each visit.** Ask your doctor to check your feet.
- **Get your eyes and kidneys checked** at least once a year.
- **See your dentist** at least twice a year. Tell your dentist you have diabetes.

Set Goals You Can Reach

- **Break a big goal into small steps.** Say you want to be more active. Start by taking one five-minute walk three times a week. Then try walking longer or more often.
- **Make changes that you can stick with** for the rest of your life. If you want to lose weight and keep it off, be active and limit portion sizes. Don't just go on a diet.

Create a Plan to Live Well With Diabetes

- **Think about all of your reasons** for wanting to control your blood sugar. Make a list and post it where you will see it often.
- **Think about what can tempt you to slip up** when it comes to controlling your blood sugar. Decide **now** how you will overcome it.
- **Reward yourself** for staying in control. Rent a movie, buy a plant, or spend time with a friend.
- **Ask for help** from friends and family when you're down or need someone to talk to.

Do Not Give Up!

- **If you slip up, admit it.** Learn what you can from it.
- **Do not be too hard on yourself.** A setback is not the end of the world.
- **Let go and move on.** Take it a day at a time.

For more information

Contact a Diabetes Educator (nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and other health professionals)
To find a diabetes teacher near you, call:
The American Association of Diabetes Educators toll-free at 1-800-TEAMUP4 (1-800-832-6874)
or visit the website at www.aadenet.org and click on "Find an Educator."

All Material on this handout is for information only. This does not replace your doctor's advice

Adapted from the National Diabetes Clearinghouse Website Publication

Control Diabetes: First Steps in Healthy Eating

Do not worry. You do not need to eat "special foods."
Eating with diabetes is healthy eating for all!

What are the simple rules for eating?

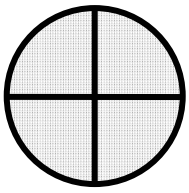
- Try to eat 3 meals at about the same time each day.
- Your body can better control your blood sugar if you eat at about the same time each day.
- Do not skip meals. Never go more than 4 to 6 hours without eating.

What do you eat?

- Eat protein, starch, and a "veggie" (vegetable) at each meal to help control blood sugar.
- Do not eat more than 1 to 2 servings of starch (such as bread, potatoes, or rice) at each meal. Starches change quickly into sugar. Eating too many starches at one meal can make your blood sugar number go too high. A serving of bread is one slice, a serving of potato is one small potato, and a serving of rice is 1/3 cup.
- Choose foods high in fiber. High fiber foods such as oatmeal, whole wheat bread and dark green "veggies" help control your blood sugar. Starches with fiber do not break down into sugar as quickly.
- Cut down on portion size if you are trying to lose weight.
- Most of the fluids you drink should be drinks without sugar. Water is a great choice.
- Eat foods from all the food groups.

What are some healthy choices from each of the food groups?
Starch: Whole grains, corn, potatoes, rice, beans, bread, tortillas
"Veggies": Fresh, frozen, or canned (rinse to lower the salt)
Fruit: Fresh, frozen or canned (without extra sugar added)
Milk: Nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk or yogurt
Protein: Lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs and low-fat cheese
Fats: Small amounts of oil, butter or salad dressing (Choose canola, peanut, or olive oil. Do not use margarine with trans-fats. Look for the words, "no trans-fats" on the food label.)

How much?



- Pretend your plate is cut into four equal parts.
  - Your protein choice should fit on one of the four parts.
  - Your starch choice should fit on one of the four parts.
  - Fill two parts of your plate with your "veggies."

What about candy and desserts?

- It is best to eat dessert as part of your meal. When you eat a small serving of "sweets," eat fewer servings of starch at the meal.
- Ask your diabetes teacher how to fit desserts into your meals. Any food you enjoy can fit into your meal plan.
- You can use NutraSweet®, Equal® (aspartame), or Splenda® to sweeten your food or drinks rather than sugar.

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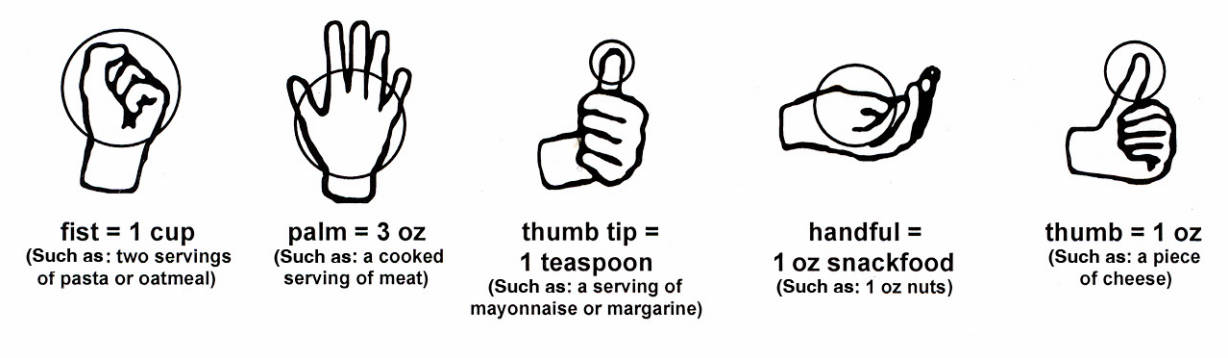
Common Questions

Will I have to eat less?
Your doctor may have told you to lose weight. Losing weight if you are overweight can help improve your diabetes control. Sometimes a loss of only 10 to 15 pounds will help blood sugar. Do not eat fried foods. Eat small serving sizes. Just cutting back on the amount of food you eat can help you reach your weight goal.

What about fast foods?
You can eat fast foods. Plan ahead and think about what you are going to order. Get a broiled or grilled sandwich instead of a fried one. If you want to eat french fries, share a small order. Choose water, sugar free tea or diet soda for your drink.

Can I drink alcohol?
Ask your doctor if drinking is OK. Drinking alcohol may be dangerous with the medicines you take. Your blood sugar can go down, if you drink beer, wine or liquor on an empty stomach. Ask your doctor how to fit beer, wine, or liquor into your meal plan and if it is OK for you.

Do I have to measure everything I eat?
No. Here are some quick and easy tips to keep on track of portions without using a measuring cup. A serving of meat is about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand. Look at the pictures below to see other portion sizes.



Eating and taking care of your diabetes can be easy. Your whole family can help you.
Plan ahead. Shop for healthy foods. Keep portion sizes in mind.
Take a short walk after meals.

For more information

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Control Diabetes:
Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers

You must know your blood sugar numbers to control your diabetes. Testing is the only way to know whether your blood sugar is too high, too low, or just right.

There are two types of tests to measure your blood sugar.

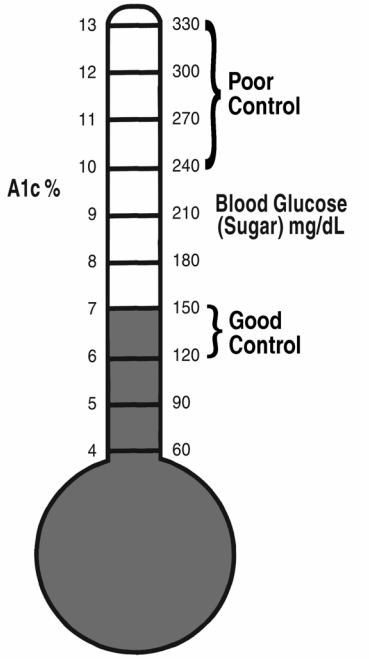
1. The **A1c test** measures your blood sugar control over the **past 3 months.** It is the best way to know if your blood sugar is under good control.
2. A **blood sugar (glucose) test** measures your blood sugar **at the time you test**. You can do this test at home using a simple meter and test strips. This test is also done in your doctor's office.

You need both tests to get a complete picture of your blood sugar control.

The A1c test is a simple lab test.

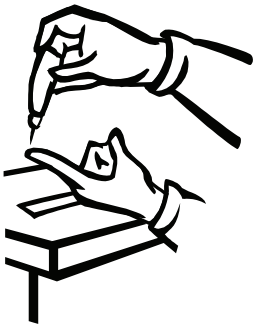
Your doctor takes a small sample of your blood and sends it to the lab. This test tells you and your doctor the amount of sugar in your blood over the past 2 to 3 months. Your A1c number is the best test to see if your blood sugar is close to normal or too high.

- The goal for most people with diabetes is less than 7%. (Look at the meter on the right to see what your A1c number tells you about your blood sugar number over time.)
- If your number is over 8%, your doctor will most likely change your treatment plan. We know that the higher your A1c is over time, the more likely you are to have problems related to diabetes.



The blood sugar (glucose) test.

This is a quick and simple test you can do at home. Blood sugar testing at home is a key part of good diabetes care. Ask your pharmacist or diabetes teacher to show you the proper way to test. Ask your doctor about when and how often to test. Common times to test are before meals, at bedtime, and two hours after eating.



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Blood sugar goals for most people with diabetes

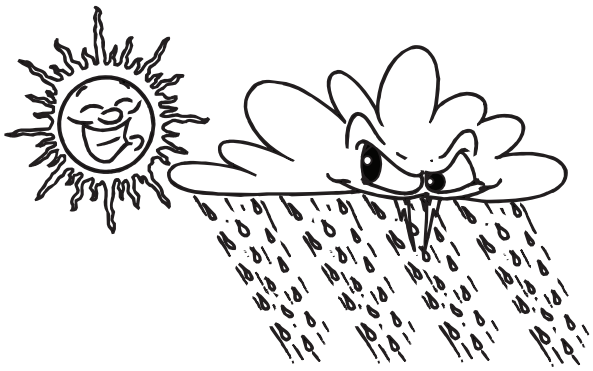
These goals are common for home tests.

- **Before Meals** ..... Between 80 and 120 mg/dl
- **At Bedtime** ..... Between 100 and 140 mg/dl
- **Two hours after meals** ..... No more than 30 to 50 "points" above your blood sugar number before you ate
- **Testing two hours after meals** is a good way to see how your food choices affect your blood sugar.
- **Keep a record** of your blood tests and medicines. Most meters come with a log book. Write down any changes made in your meals and how you were feeling. Bring your record with you to your doctor visits. Share it with your doctor.

- **Treat low blood sugar right away.** Use diabetes tablets or glucose gel. You can also use 4 to 5 lifesavers or 4 ounces of juice or soda (not diet). Write it down in your log book. Tell your doctor when this happens. Your medicine may need to be changed.

Do Not Give Up!

If you slip up, admit it. Learn what you can from it.
Do not be too hard on yourself. A setback is not the end of the world. Try again. Get help. Ask questions.
Let go and move on. Take it a day at a time.



For more information

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(Adapted from the National Diabetes Clearinghouse Publication)

Control Diabetes: Why do I need Medicine?

I only have type 2 diabetes.

If you have type 2 diabetes, your pancreas makes insulin. But your body cannot use the insulin you make correctly. The medicine helps your insulin work better.

Here are some key points.

- Pills that lower blood sugar (glucose) never take the place of healthy eating and exercise.
- If your blood sugar gets too low more than a few times in a few days, call your doctor.
- Take your diabetes pills even if you are sick. If you cannot eat much, call your doctor.
- Just because your doctor changes or adds medicine does not mean it's your fault.

What do I need to know about diabetes pills?

Many types of pills can help people with type 2 diabetes lower their blood sugar (glucose). Each type of pill helps lower blood sugar in a different way. Check the chart on the back side of this fact sheet. Each row outlined boldly is a type of diabetes medicine.

You may take more than one kind of pill. As each pill works in its own way, you may get better results using more than one type of pill. Always take your pill(s) as your doctor tells you to do. If you are not sure how to take the pill, ask your doctor. You can also ask your pharmacist.

Your doctor may start you out on one type of pill. If the pill does not lower your blood sugar enough, your doctor can increase the amount you take. Your doctor may also add a new pill. You may then take two types of pills.

At some point your doctor might ask you to take insulin with one of the diabetes pills. Medicines are changed to get your blood sugar numbers as close to normal as possible. This prevents damage to your body from diabetes. Your doctor will work with you to get the best treatment plan to keep you living well with diabetes. Always tell your doctor about any side effects.

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What are side effects?

Side effects are changes that may happen in your body when you take a new pill. Ask your doctor what to expect when you are given new pills. Ask what the side effects might be.

Some side effects happen only when you start to take new pills. Then they go away.

Some side effects happen only once in a while. You may get used to them or learn how to manage them.

Some side effects are more severe. Tell your doctor but do not stop taking the medicine until your doctor tells you to stop. Your doctor may try another medicine.

Brand name*	Generic Name**	How It Works	How You Take It
Amaryl Diabeta Glucotrol Micronase	Glimepiride Glyburide Glipizide Tolazamide	Helps your pancreas make more insulin.	Take 30 minutes before your meal.
Glucophage	Metformin	Helps your liver put out less glycogen (stored sugar).	Take just before you begin to eat your meal.
Precose	Acarbose	Slows down the time it takes for your body to break down food into sugar.	Take with the first bites of food.
Prandin	Repaglinide	Helps your pancreas make more insulin.	Take with meals
Humulin R	Regular human insulin	Gives your body insulin	Depends upon the type. Regular insulin is injected 30 minutes before your meal.

* There are other names for this type of medicine.
** Many types of insulin are now available.

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Adapted from niddk.nih.gov/health/diabetes/pub site-03

Control Diabetes: Why do I need insulin?

If you have type 1 diabetes, your pancreas cannot make any insulin. You must take insulin to live. If you have type 2 diabetes and need insulin it is because all the other medicines are not working to keep your blood sugar where it needs to be to prevent problems. Keep in mind, insulin does not cause the problems. **High blood sugar** causes the damage to organs and your body.

What do I need to know about insulin?

You take insulin as a shot. You inject the insulin just under the skin with a small, short needle.

Can insulin be taken as a pill?

No. Insulin is a protein. If you took insulin as a pill, your body would break it down and digest it before it got into your blood to lower your blood glucose.

How does insulin work?

Insulin lowers blood sugar levels by moving sugar (glucose) from the blood into the cells of your body. Once inside the cells, glucose provides energy. Insulin lowers your blood glucose whether you eat or not. This is why you must eat on time if you take insulin.

How often should I take insulin?

Most people with diabetes need at least two insulin shots a day. Some people take three or four shots a day. Your doctor works with you to get good glucose control.

When should I take insulin?

Take insulin 30 minutes before a meal if taking regular or long-acting insulin. If you take a fast-acting insulin, you should take your shot just before you eat.

How many types of insulin are there?

There are six main types of insulin. Each one works at it's own speed - fast, medium, or slow. Many people take two types of insulin.

Does insulin work the same all the time?

After a short time, you will get to know when your insulin starts to work, when it works its hardest to lower blood glucose, and when it finishes working. You will learn to match your mealtimes and exercise times to the time when each insulin dose you take works in your body.

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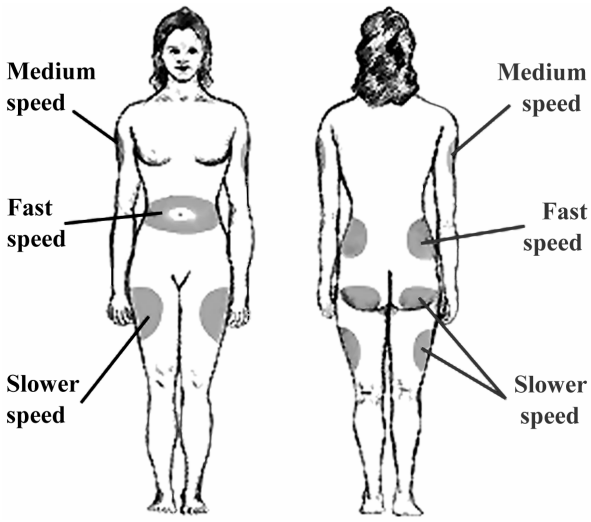
How quickly or slowly insulin works in your body depends on many things.

- Your own body.
- The place on your body where you inject insulin.
- The type and amount of exercise you do.
- The length of time between your shot and exercise.



Where on my body should I inject insulin?

You can inject insulin into many places on your body. Inject near the stomach and it works fastest. Inject into the thigh and it works slowest. Inject into the arm and it works at medium speed. Ask your doctor or diabetes teacher to show you the right way to take insulin and in which parts of the body to inject it.

How should I store insulin?

It depends upon how much you use.

If you use a whole bottle of insulin in 30 days…

- Keep the bottle you are using at room temperature.
- Once open, write the date 30 days away on your bottle. Do this every time you open a bottle. For example, if today's date were 11/14/03 then you would write 12/14/03 on the bottle.
- Throw away the bottle after the 30 days have passed.

If you use <u>less</u> than a whole bottle of insulin in 30 days…

- Keep the bottle in the refrigerator <u>all the time</u>.
- Do **not** keep the bottle in very cold places like the freezer.
- Do **not** keep the bottle in hot places such as the trunk of the car or by a window.

Heat and extreme cold breaks down insulin and it will not work. It is helpful to keep extra bottles of insulin in your house. Make sure to store all extra bottles in the refrigerator.

What are some side effects of insulin?

The most common side effects are weight gain and having low blood sugar (glucose). You need insulin to keep your blood sugar in good control. Your doctor will work with you to get the best treatment plan to keep you living well with diabetes.

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