

# Discharge Information: Diabetes



You were treated in the hospital for diabetes. This is a condition where your body has a problem making or using insulin.

This handout tells you and your caregiver what you need to know about your care in the first weeks at home. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are things you do not understand.

## Follow-Up Appointments

Name of Doctor	Date & Time	Phone Number
1.		
2.		
3.		



## Eating Plan

Follow an eating plan to manage your blood sugar. Ask your dietitian or nurse to help you make the changes you need.

- Eat 3 small meals and 2 to 3 snacks every day.
- Eat at the same time every day. Do not skip meals or snacks.
- Eat a range of healthy foods in the amounts listed in your diabetes meal plan.
  - o Broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes, and cauliflower are nonstarchy vegetables.
  - o Chicken (no skin), fish, beans, tofu, and nuts have healthy protein.
  - o Whole grain cereals, vegetables, and fruits are high in fiber.
  - o Olive and canola oils have healthy fats. They are also found in avocados and fatty fish such as salmon.
  - o Limit the amount of sugar you get. Sugar is in fruit juice, flavored teas and waters, and most desserts. Ask your doctor about using foods sweetened with an artificial sweetener.

- Talk to the dietitian or nurse about other concerns you may have about your eating plan.
  - o What to eat at restaurants and parties
  - o How to stick to your meal plan if you are busy
  - o How to avoid eating tempting foods

Read the “Nutrition Facts” panel on packaged foods to see if that food is a healthy choice. Look at the amounts of total calories, fat, sodium, and other nutrients per serving.

- Many packages have more than 1 serving.
- If you eat more than 1 serving, multiply the nutrition amounts by the number of servings. This will tell you what nutrition amounts you are really eating.



## Activity

Get regular physical activity to help keep your blood sugar (glucose) in control.

- Start exercising slowly. Start after your doctor gives you the OK.
- Talk to your doctor about what blood sugar levels are safe when you exercise.
  - o Ask about your carbohydrate needs during exercise.
  - o If you take insulin, ask about your insulin needs during exercise.
- Set a goal of 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic exercise a day on most days of the week. This includes brisk walking, jogging, swimming, or bike riding.
  - o Check your blood sugar level before and after exercising. Do not exercise if your blood sugar is too low.
  - o Wear the right shoes and socks for the exercise.

Do not sit or stand for long periods without moving your legs and feet.

Do not drive or return to work until your doctor says it is OK.



## Self-Care

Keep all doctor appointments.

Help manage your diabetes.

- Keep a diary of your blood sugar (glucose) levels to show your doctor.

Write the dates and times of:

- o Blood sugar test results
  - o Medicines you take
  - o Foods you eat
  - o Activity, such as walking for 30 minutes
- Know the signs of high and low blood sugar and what to do.
  - Talk to the doctor about a plan for your diabetes when you are sick.
  - Tell family members, friends, and coworkers about your diabetes. They should know the signs of high or low blood sugar and what to do.
  - Get a medical ID bracelet, necklace, or card for your wallet that says you have diabetes. Carry it at all times.

Test your blood sugar (glucose) as often as your doctor has told you to.

- Follow the instructions for setting and caring for the glucometer.
- Know your target blood sugar ranges.
- Keep a diary to show your doctor. Include all the results and the time of day.
- Keep all supplies together. Follow the proper steps to get rid of used supplies.

If you or your caregiver needs to give you a shot:

- Give the shots the way you were taught.
- Rotate the shots to different parts of your body.
- Keep all supplies together. Follow the proper steps to get rid of used supplies.

If you have an insulin pump, learn how to care for it. Know who to call if you have problems, and how to care for the site where it enters your skin.

Prevent serious foot problems.

- Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, sores, or redness. Tell your doctor right away if you find problems. Do not try to treat corns and calluses yourself.
- Wash your feet every day using lukewarm (not hot) water and mild soap.
  - Pat your feet dry. Dry between the toes.
  - Rub moisturizer lotion on your feet to prevent dry skin. Do not put lotion between the toes.
- Try to keep the blood flowing well to your feet by stretching and walking daily if you can. Do not cross your legs while sitting.
- Do not walk barefoot. Wear shoes that are comfortable and fit well.
  - Always wear clean, dry socks. Cotton or wool socks without seams or tight top bands are best.
  - Shake your shoes out before putting them on.
  - Always feel inside shoes for things that could hurt your feet.

If you smoke, you should stop now. Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.



## Medicine

When you leave the hospital, you should get:

- A list of all the medicines you should take
- Prescriptions for any new medicines

Take your medicine as your doctor asked you to.

- Talk to your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Include your prescription medicines, and vitamins, herbs, and medicines you buy at the store.
- Take the medicine list to every doctor or hospital visit.
- Get the follow-up tests that your doctor orders.

Take your diabetes medicine as you were taught.

- Take the medicine at the same time every day.
- Do not skip meals.
- The amount of medicine you take may need to change when you exercise or if you are sick.
- If you give yourself shots, tell your doctor if you have problems doing so. Your doctor can get someone to teach you how to do it. You can also have a family member or friend learn how to give shots.

These programs help you pay for prescription medicines if you cannot afford them.

- NeedyMeds. Go to: [www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org)
- Partnership for Prescription Assistance. Go to: [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org) or call 1.888.477.2669.



## **When to Call for Emergency Help**

You have any of these diabetes problems.

- No one can wake you up.
- You have a seizure (body shaking, staring, eyes rolling).
- You have new and very bad stomach pain.
- You suddenly have a change in your eyesight.
  - o You see black spots, cobwebs, or flashing lights that are not really there.
  - o You cannot see out of one or both eyes.
- You think you are having a heart attack or a stroke.



## When to Call Your Regular Doctor

You show signs of high blood sugar (hyperglycemia).

- You have an upset stomach (nausea) or you throw up (vomit).
- You are very thirsty or hungry just after eating.
- You need to urinate more than usual.
- You feel confused or have trouble paying attention.
- You feel weak or tired.

You show signs of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

- You are shaky.
- You are anxious, confused, or have trouble speaking or paying attention.
- You have cold or clammy skin.
- You are dizzy or light-headed.
- You feel very weak or tired.

You have any of these problems.

- You have a fever of 101 or higher for 12 hours.
- You have loose stools (diarrhea) for more than 6 hours.
- You have calluses, blisters, infections, or sores on your legs or feet.



## Learn More

- American Diabetes Association. Go to: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases - National Institutes of Health. Go to: [www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov)
- National Institutes of Health. Go to: [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

This information is general in nature and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you might have. This information sheet is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

## Signatures

Patient or Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

Nurse

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

