

What to Do to Manage Your Type 2 Diabetes



CENTER FOR
HEALTHY LIVING



KAISER PERMANENTE

If you just found out that you have type 2 diabetes, take a deep breath. It's normal to feel overwhelmed or scared when you first get diagnosed, but type 2 diabetes can be managed. Small changes over time can have a big impact on your life.

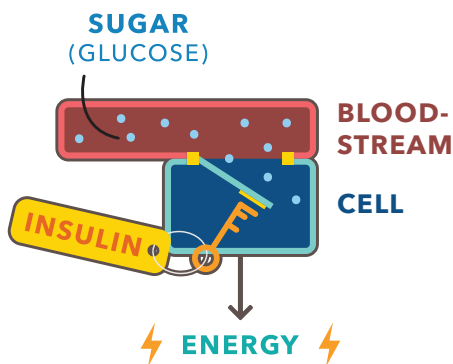
When it comes to how type 2 diabetes affects your health and your life, you're the one in control. This booklet will make sure you know where to start, what you need to do, when to do it, and why it's important.

An easy way to get started is to just pick one or two things to focus on (page 3 will give you some ideas). Don't let any of this overwhelm you. You have a great support team with Kaiser Permanente.

TYPE 2 DIABETES 101 ("THE BASICS")

What is type 2 diabetes?

When you have type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or use the insulin it makes well. Insulin is the "key" that unlocks your cells and allows sugar in so your body can do things like walk and talk. If sugar can't get into your cells, it stays in your blood, which causes problems for your feet, eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart.



What causes type 2 diabetes?

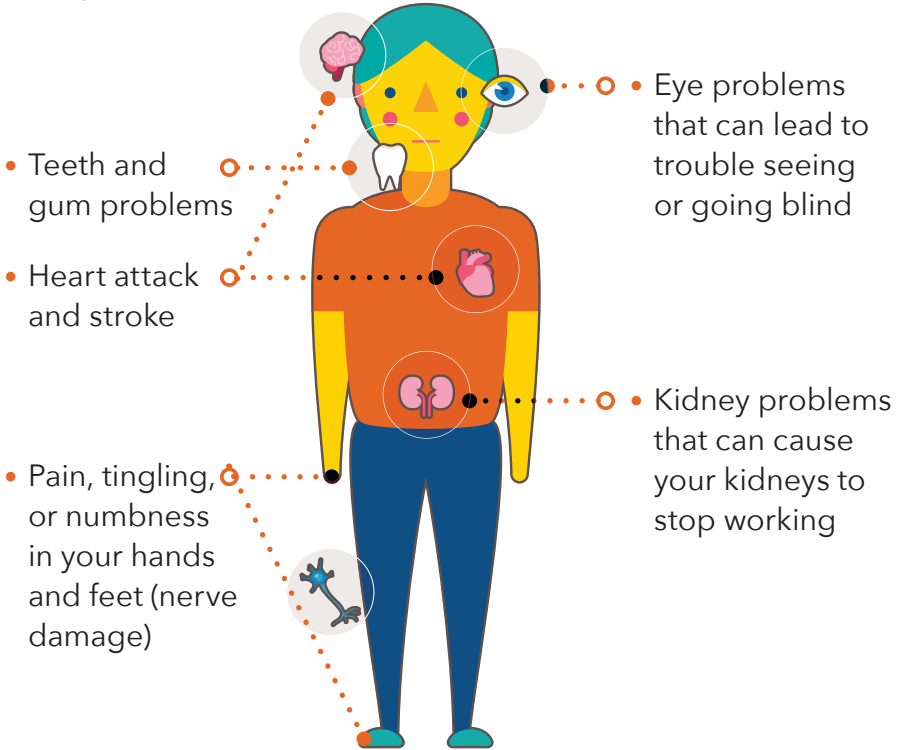
Type 2 diabetes has several causes, including genetics/family history, age, and lifestyle factors such as physical activity, weight, and nutrition.

What are the symptoms?

Some people who have type 2 diabetes may not have any symptoms early on. Many people don't even know they have it at first. But with time, diabetes starts to cause symptoms. You experience most symptoms of type 2 diabetes when your blood sugar (also called blood glucose) is either too high or too low. See page 6 for more about high and low blood sugar.

Why is it important to manage diabetes?

When your blood sugar is too high for too long, it can slowly take a toll on your body, affecting your eyes, feet, nerves, kidneys, and heart.



How can I manage type 2 diabetes?

The great news is that type 2 diabetes can be managed, and you're the one in control. Balancing what you eat with exercise and medicine (if needed) can keep your blood sugar in a healthy range.

The rest of this booklet talks about what you can do every day and throughout the year to manage type 2 diabetes.

Remember, you don't have to do everything at once. It can be helpful to pick one or two things to focus on first.

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**PICK
ONE
to start!**

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Staying Healthy with Type 2 Diabetes: Day to Day

Let's start with what you need to do every day.

✓ Check Your Blood Sugar

With type 2 diabetes, you usually can't tell how high your blood sugar is based on how you feel. That's why you need to measure it. Plus, by checking your blood sugar you can get some great information that you can use in your daily life:

- What foods (or amounts of food) work for you
- Whether you need to take more or less medication, or a different kind
- If you take insulin, it can tell you and your doctor whether you need to change the amount or kind

Before you check your blood sugar

- **Know your schedule and numbers, and stick to it.**
 - You and your doctor will talk about **when** you should check your blood sugar and what your **target blood sugar range** should be. If you don't have a schedule yet, start out by checking a few times a day before and after meals. Here's an example of when to test and what your target range might be*:

When to Test	Before Meals	2 Hours After You Start a Meal	At Bedtime
Target Blood Sugar Range*	80-120	Less than 160	100-140

*Talk to your doctor about your goal, as it may be different.

- **Gather your supplies.**



- Blood glucose meter
- Test strips
- Lancing device (looks like a pen with a small needle, called a lancet, that pops out to prick your skin to get a tiny drop of blood)
- Lancet
- Diabetes diary or logbook
- Sharps container (to throw away the lancet)

- **Review your meter's instruction manual.**



- All meters are a little different, so it's important to read the instructions that came with yours.

Steps to checking your blood sugar



Step 1: Wash your hands with warm water and soap.

Step 2: Put a new test strip in the meter.

Step 3: Prepare the lancet device and prick the side of your finger.



Step 4: Apply blood to the test strip according to your meter's directions.



Step 5: Record the blood sugar numbers in your diabetes diary, a notebook, or a glucose meter app.



Step 6: Throw away the test strip and the lancet (not the lancing device) after each blood sugar check. Make sure to throw away your lancet in a sharps container. You can usually get sharps containers at a drugstore or in a Kaiser Permanente pharmacy.

How to treat low and high blood sugar

LOW Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

(hi-po-gly-see-mee-uh)

Blood sugar range: Below 70 mg/dl, or if you have the symptoms listed below

Causes: Too little food or skipping a meal; too much insulin or diabetes medication; more active than usual

Symptoms:

- Weakness or fatigue
- Dizzy
- Headache
- Blurry vision
- Sweating
- Fast heartbeat
- Anxious
- Hungry
- Irritable
- Shaky

What to do:

- Check your blood sugar.
- If below 70, follow the **15/15 rule**:
 - Eat **15 grams** of carbohydrate (such as 3–4 glucose tablets or ½ cup juice).
 - Wait **15 minutes**.
 - Check your blood sugar. If it's still below 70, repeat. Once your blood sugar gets back above 70, follow up with a healthy snack.

HIGH Blood Sugar (Hyperglycemia)

(hi-per-gly-see-mee-uh)

Blood sugar range: Above 240 mg/dl

Causes: Too much food, too little insulin or diabetes medication, illness, inactivity, or stress

Symptoms:

- Drowsy
- Blurry vision
- Extreme thirst
- Hungry
- Need to urinate often
- Dry skin
- Slow healing wounds

What to do:

- Check your blood sugar every 4 hours.
- Drink 1–2 cups of water, caffeine-free/calorie-free liquid, diet gelatin, or clear broth.
- If your blood sugar is above 300 mg/dl for 8 hours, call your doctor.
- **Go to the Emergency Department** if you are nauseous, vomiting, or have stomach pain.

Your blood sugar numbers will go up and down from time to time. It's just part of managing diabetes. The key is to not let one or two bad results every now and then get you upset.

✓ Eat Healthy

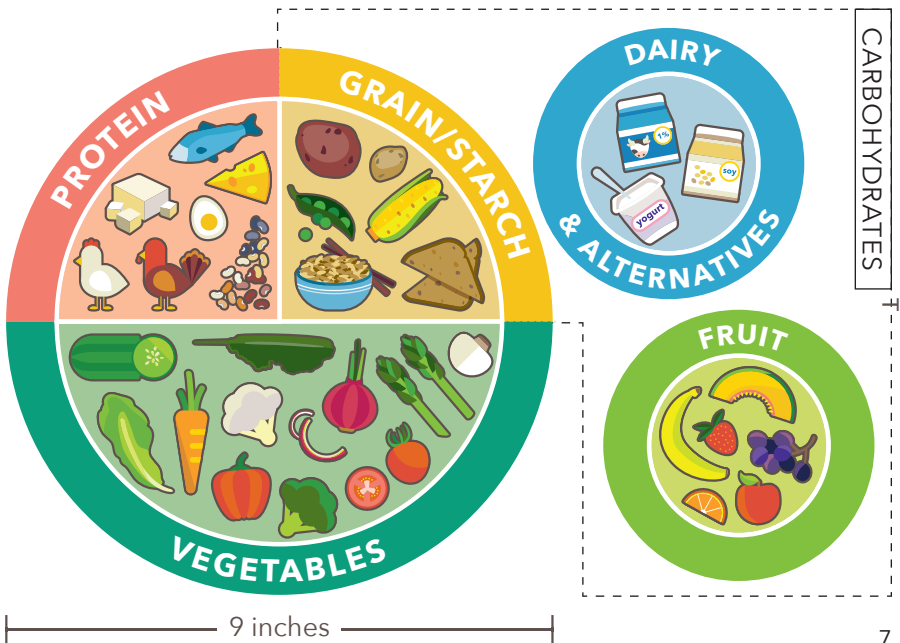
You probably have a lot of questions about food and eating, like:

- What can I eat?
- When is the best time to eat?
- How much should I eat?
- Do I have to give up my favorite foods?

These are great questions because eating well and controlling your blood sugar go hand in hand. The good news is that this isn't about changing everything you eat or even giving up your favorite foods altogether. It's about making small changes that can add up over time.

What to eat

One of the easiest ways to get started with healthy eating is to use the healthy plate method. This is a simple way to plan meals that doesn't require any counting or measuring. The best part is that you can use it almost anywhere. All you need is a plate! Don't use the biggest plate you have; it should be about 9 inches across.





Fill half of the plate with nonstarchy vegetables. For example, choose tomatoes, broccoli, lettuce, mushrooms, asparagus, or carrots.



In one quarter of the plate, add a healthy whole grain or starch, such as brown rice, quinoa, potatoes, corn, or peas. Don't pile your food too high.



In the other quarter of the plate, add your protein: meat, fish, eggs, or tofu. These should be the size of a deck of cards.



For a complete meal, add 1 cup of milk, a small yogurt, or a nondairy alternative. Finally, add a medium-sized whole fruit (size of a tennis ball) or ½ cup chopped fresh fruit.



When to eat

You may need to eat at about the same time each day, or you may have more flexibility with the timing of your meals, depending on things like your medications. Some people find it helpful to eat every 4 to 5 hours. Checking your blood sugar regularly can help you find a healthy eating pattern.

How much to eat

Learning about serving sizes is key to healthy eating. Food labels on packaged foods and many recipes tell you what a serving size is. The labels tell you how many calories, carbohydrates, protein, and fat are in each serving. Using the healthy plate method with a 9-inch plate is an easy way to measure serving sizes.

If you are taking insulin, your carbohydrate needs (for example, corn, beans, peas, bread) may vary. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about what is right for you.

HEALTHY EATING TIPS

There is no one perfect plan for everyone. You can make a healthy eating plan that works for your likes and dislikes. If you have another health condition (like kidney disease), work with your doctor or dietitian for an eating plan that's best for you.

There are a few main things almost everyone can do.

Limit how often you have these:



- Sugary drinks like soda, sports drinks, and even juices
- Packaged and fast foods
- Alcohol

Try to eat more of these:



- Fresh foods like vegetables and fruit
- Whole grains like oats, brown rice, and 100% whole-wheat bread
- Lean protein like fish, nuts, chicken, turkey, eggs, tofu, and beans and lentils
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy

Space your meals out throughout the day and try not to skip meals:



- Eating regularly, usually about every 4 to 5 hours, is really important for people with type 2 diabetes. It helps keep blood sugar stable throughout the day.

✓ Get Moving



Regular physical activity is important for everyone, but it's especially important for people with diabetes. Physical activity helps keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol in a healthy range. It also lowers your risk for heart disease and stroke, helps insulin work better, relieves stress, helps you lose or manage your weight, and strengthens your muscles and bones.

Even if you've never exercised before, you can find ways to add a little physical activity to your day. You'll get benefits, even if the activity is only for a few minutes a day.

Just starting out?

If you're just starting out or want to get back into the habit of being physically active on a regular basis, try sneaking in more steps this week. Here are a few ways to begin:

- **Do you drive to run errands?** Park in the farthest spot of the parking lot or walk around the mall.
- **Do you drive to work?** Walk during your breaks.
- **Do you sit at work?** Set a timer on your watch or phone and stretch, stand, or walk in place every 30 minutes.
- **Have a favorite activity?** Choose something fun you love to do like walking your dog, salsa dancing, swimming, Zumba, golfing, or simply just walking.

Build up over time!

Start with 5 to 10 minutes of moderate activity (like brisk walking) a day and work your way up. Try to work up to walking or another kind of exercise for 30 minutes, 5 days a week.

✓ Quit Tobacco



Diabetes already affects your blood vessels, and using tobacco puts even more strain on them. However, the good news is that once you cut out tobacco, your risk for heart attack and stroke drops very quickly, even if you've been using tobacco for 30 years!



Quitting isn't easy, so Kaiser Permanente offers a lot of resources to support you. Check out the Freedom from Tobacco workshop for in-person support at a Center for Healthy Living near you. Visit kp.org/centerforhealthyliving for information. Go to kp.org/breathe for online tools to kick the habit.



You can also get support to quit tobacco by working with a wellness coach on the phone to set goals for healthy, lasting change. Together, you'll build a plan of action tailored just for you. Coaching is offered in English and Spanish at no charge to Kaiser Permanente members. To schedule a phone appointment with a coach, call **1-866-862-4295** Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

Weight Loss: Losing just 5 to 10% of your body weight can help you lower your blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure.

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Sleep: Getting a good night's sleep can also help control your blood sugar!

✓ Take Your Medication

Choosing to eat healthy and be active is the perfect starting point on your journey to managing diabetes. Like many people with diabetes, you may also need to take medication to help you feel your best.

Your doctor will work with you to figure out exactly what you need, which may include:



- **Diabetes pills:** Help your body release or use insulin better



- **Insulin:** A hormone that helps your body control your blood sugar and use or store energy from the food you eat



- **Aspirin:** Lowers your risk of heart attack



- **ACE inhibitors:** Lower blood pressure and protect kidneys



- **Statins:** Lower cholesterol and help reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack



- **Vaccinations (flu, pneumonia, and hepatitis B):** Diabetes makes you more likely to have complications from infections, making vaccinations very important

Bottom line: Don't worry or stress about needing to take medications or insulin. They are there to help you, and it's very common to need medications so you can stay healthy with diabetes.

✓ Take Care of Your Feet

When you have diabetes, your feet need extra attention and care. Diabetes can damage the nerves in your feet, which can cause tingling, pain (burning and stinging), weakness, and poor blood flow to your feet. These symptoms can make you less likely to notice when your feet are injured.



These simple tips can help keep your feet healthy:

- Check your feet every day for sores, cracks, nail problems, swelling, or blisters.



- Keep your feet clean and dry.



- Moisturize your feet on the tops and bottoms.



- Trim your toenails straight across and use a nail file to smooth corners.



- Protect your feet with good-fitting shoes and socks. Do not walk barefoot.



- Quit smoking and limit alcohol to reduce nerve damage and circulation problems.

It's important to talk to your health care team if you have any of these changes to your feet:

- Color changes
- Temperature changes (hot or cold)
- Swelling
- Pain, tingling, burning, or numbness
- Ingrown toenails
- Calluses or corns
- Cracks and sores
- Smell or drainage (bleeding or pus)

Staying Healthy with Type 2 Diabetes: Throughout the Year

There are a few things you can do throughout the year to help you stay healthy. It's important to make and keep your doctor's appointments to help you avoid complications.

Bring this checklist, your blood sugar logbook, and your meter to each doctor visit so you can easily keep track!

At Each Doctor Visit

What	Why
Foot Check	Your health care team will do a quick foot check at each appointment to look for any sores, blisters, or callouses to make sure your feet are healthy.
Review Personal Action Plan	Bring your diabetes diary or blood sugar logbook with you to share with your health care team. They can help answer questions you have about food, physical activity, or anything else.
Weight Check	Losing weight, if needed, can help to lower your blood sugar and improve overall health. Your health care team will likely check your weight at each visit.
Blood Pressure Check	High blood pressure is especially harmful when you have diabetes. Your health care team will check your blood pressure at each visit to make sure it is well controlled, or they will work with you to help control it.
Review Medicines	By bringing your diabetes diary or blood sugar logbook, you and your health care team can check to see how things are going and whether you need any medication changes.

At Least Twice a Year

What	Why
A1C (A-One-C) Test	Your A1C tells you how well your blood sugar was controlled over the past few months. It's how you find out whether what you're doing every day is working or whether you need to change something. (Usually, the goal is to have an A1C less than 7%, but find out where your doctor wants you to be.)
Dental Exam	Diabetes puts you at greater risk for oral infection. Practicing good oral hygiene and visiting your dentist twice a year can help you prevent any complications.
Fasting Blood Glucose Test	This test measures blood sugar after you have not eaten for at least 8 hours. It helps to diagnose diabetes or prediabetes.

Once a Year

What	Why
Complete Eye Exam	High blood sugar levels can damage your eyes. This exam is done by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. It includes a dilated eye exam or retinal screening photo, which shows whether there's damage to the back of the eye.
Complete Foot Exam	The doctor checks for sores and whether you have lost any sensation in your feet.

Once a Year (continued)

What	Why
Cholesterol	It's common for people with diabetes to also have high cholesterol. Too much cholesterol in the blood can build up inside the blood vessels and raise the risk of heart attack and stroke.
Flu Shot	People with diabetes have a greater risk of complications from the flu. Get a flu shot every year to lower your chances of getting sick.
Kidney Check	This test checks for kidney damage by looking for the protein albumin (al-BYOO-mun) in the urine. Albumin is normally found in the blood. Kidney damage can let small amounts of it leak into the urine.

At Least Once in Your Lifetime

What	Why
Pneumonia Shot	People with diabetes are at greater risk for pneumonia. A simple and safe shot can help protect you.
Hepatitis B Shot	People with diabetes are at increased risk for hepatitis B if they share blood glucose meters, fingerstick devices, or other diabetes equipment. The vaccination is a series of 3 injections given over several months.

WHEN YOU GET SICK

When you have diabetes, getting sick can affect your blood sugar so you'll need to take special care of yourself. These tips can help!

Keep taking your medicine. Even if you're throwing up or having trouble eating or drinking, it's important to take your medicine. If you can't, call your doctor and talk about whether you need to adjust your medicine.

Keep eating at regular times. Try to eat your normal types and amounts of food and drink extra fluids. Ask your doctor about how often and how much you should eat and drink when you're sick.

Check your blood sugar. Check your blood sugar at least every 3 to 4 hours, or more often if it's rising quickly.

Check for changes. Weigh yourself and check your temperature, breathing rate, and pulse often. If you are losing weight and your temperature, breathing rate, and pulse are increasing, call your doctor.

Talk to your doctor before taking nonprescription medicine. Many nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines can affect your blood sugar, so check with your doctor before taking them.

RESOURCES

Kaiser Permanente offers many resources to help support you while you manage your type 2 diabetes.



In Person

Living Well with Diabetes. This workshop includes group-based sessions, where you can join others in getting support to manage diabetes. The series covers these topics:

- Achieving Your Target Blood Sugar
- Eating to Feel Your Best
- Finding Your Balance
- Taking Care of Yourself with Medication

Healthy Balance: A Weight Management Program.

This multi-session program is focused on learning new ways to eat healthy and get active. It includes in-person workshops and phone coaching sessions.

Learn more about these and other workshops by visiting kp.org/centerforhealthyliving, or sign up by calling your local Kaiser Permanente Center for Healthy Living.



Online

Care for Diabetes. This online program can help you find and change unhealthy habits that may be holding you back. You'll get a personalized plan to improve your health based on your lifestyle and preferences. Learn more at kp.org/carefordiabetes.



By Phone

Wellness Coaching by Phone. If you need support to quit tobacco, manage your weight, get active, reduce stress, or eat healthy, you can work with your own personal wellness coach on the phone to set goals for healthy, lasting change. Together, you'll build a plan of action tailored just for you. Coaching is offered in English and Spanish at no charge to Kaiser Permanente members. To schedule a phone appointment, call [1-866-862-4295](tel:1-866-862-4295) Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Your Living Well with Diabetes workshop is:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Visit kp.org/centerforhealthyliving
for workshop information.