Take control of your diabetes

Choose healthy foods
Eating the right foods will help you stay healthy. While you may want to watch your weight, don't skip meals. That will cause blood sugar problems. Try these changes:

- Replace white bread with whole-grain bread.
- Skip the cookies and chips.
- Limit fatty meats. Choose lean cuts and fish.
- Drink skim milk or water, and avoid soft drinks.

Carbohydrate counting is an easy way to plan meals. It involves adding up all the carbs you plan to eat at a meal. If you take insulin, this helps you figure out how much insulin you need.

If you don't take insulin, carb counting will help you balance your diet and know how much sugar you are eating. This helps you follow the plan you may have made with your doctor. Your health care team can help you find out how many carbs you can eat each day.

Watch out for your eyes
Diabetes puts you at extra risk for eye diseases. This includes diabetic retinopathy, a disease that affects the retina. Diabetes also increases your risk for glaucoma.

If left untreated, these problems could lead to blindness. Talk with your doctor if you have trouble seeing. Be on the lookout for these symptoms caused by diabetes:

- Pain or pressure in one or both eyes
- Blurry, cloudy, or double vision
- Trouble seeing out of the corners of your eyes
- Flashing lights or floating spots in your field of vision

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your doctor may recommend based on individual facts about you.

MetroPlus Health Plan
160 Water St. 3rd Fl, New York, NY 10038
MetroPlus Medicaid: 1.800.475.METRO (6387) (TTY 1.800.881.2812)
MetroPlus Medicare: 1.866.986.0356 TTY: 711
Hours of operation: Monday–Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
First things first

Living with diabetes can be a challenge, but there is a lot you can do to stay well.

Keeping track of your blood glucose—also called blood sugar—is one of the best ways you can take care of yourself. When you have diabetes, your blood sugar is too high. Glucose comes from the foods you eat and is also made by your liver and muscles. Your body needs some glucose to give you energy.

Too much glucose is bad for your health, though. As years go by, it can cause problems with your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, nerves and gums.

Keeping tabs at home

Your doctor will talk to you about testing your blood sugar at home with a glucose meter, or Glucometer. Meters use a drop of blood on a test strip. The meter then displays your blood sugar level.

By testing your blood sugar levels, you will know when to take action if the levels are very high or low.

Find out more

Working with your health care team, you can decide how to set up your testing routine. You’ll learn the answers to these questions:

- **How often should I check my blood sugar?** It will most likely be at least 3 times a day.
- **What time of day should I check it?** People often check their blood sugar before meals, after meals, and at bedtime. If you take insulin, you may need to check more often.
- **What is my target blood sugar level?** A blood sugar level of 90 to 130 before meals and less than 180 after meals is best, but everyone is different. Your doctor will help you figure out what blood sugar level is best for you.

Don’t forget the A1c test

Another important blood sugar test is done in your doctor’s office. It will show you how well you’ve managed your blood sugar over the past 3 months. You may hear it called an A1c, Hb A1c, or hemoglobin A1c test. You should have this test every 3 to 6 months. An A1c of less than 7 percent is best.

Take care of yourself

To take care of your diabetes, take good care of your whole body. When you have diabetes, you have a higher risk for problems with your eyes, heart, and kidneys. Some bad habits, such as smoking, are even harder on people with diabetes.

Why exercise?

Exercise can help you keep a healthy weight, lower cholesterol, and relieve stress. But it has another bonus. It helps control your blood sugar. It also lowers your risk for eye and foot problems related to diabetes. Exercise helps your body use insulin better and makes your blood flow better.

Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program. Check your blood glucose right before exercising and every 30 minutes during your routine.

Pamper your feet

With diabetes, your feet need special care. Check them every day. Watch for any color changes, swelling, numbness, sores, or cuts.

Follow these tips:

- Choose shoes that have room to move your toes. Check to see that they feel good when you put them on and that the heel doesn’t slip.
- Wear soft, padded socks for activity.
- Dry your feet before putting on your socks and shoes.