



# TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH CARE

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**Your diabetes healthcare team**

# WORKING WITH YOUR DIABETES HEALTHCARE TEAM

When you have type 2 diabetes, getting regular medical care is very important. Type 2 diabetes can affect many parts of the body. You will likely get your care from a team of experts. All the members of the team work to help you get your diabetes in control. One of the best ways to manage your type 2 diabetes is by working with your healthcare team.

Below you will find each of the most common members of the diabetes healthcare team, and what they do. You will also find sample questions that you can ask each of them.

Some people find that it is useful to make a list of their questions before they see their healthcare provider, and bring the list with them. It is important that you ask all your questions, even if you think it may be a small question.



## Who Is on the Diabetes Healthcare Team?

### Primary care physician (PCP)

Also known as a family physician, this doctor may be the center of your diabetes healthcare team. He or she may coordinate your care and refer you to other members of the team.

#### Sample questions you may want to ask your PCP:

- When is the best time to take my medicine?
- Will I always need medicine?
- How will I know when I am doing the right things for my type 2 diabetes?
- How often will I need to see you for my type 2 diabetes?

### Other team members

As a person with type 2 diabetes, you will have other healthcare professionals as a part of your team. Starting on the next page is a table with a list of possible team members.

Although not every person with diabetes has the same professional on their healthcare team, many of the people listed below are part of a diabetes healthcare team.

Diabetes Health Professionals		
Who?	Description	Sample Questions to Ask
<b>Endocrinologist</b>	A doctor with special training in treating diseases such as diabetes. Not everyone with type 2 diabetes sees an endocrinologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could weight loss affect my type 2 diabetes?</li> <li>• What happens if changing my diet and exercising aren't enough to control my blood sugar?</li> <li>• Will I have to take medicine?</li> </ul>
<b>Cardiologist (Heart Doctor)</b>	A doctor who has special training in treating problems with the heart and blood vessels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can type 2 diabetes affect my heart?</li> <li>• How often should my electrocardiogram (EKG) be taken?</li> <li>• What if my cholesterol is elevated?</li> </ul>
<b>Ophthalmologist or Optometrist (Eye Doctor)</b>	A specialist with advanced training who focuses on your eye health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can type 2 diabetes affect my vision?</li> <li>• What can I do if I am having trouble seeing?</li> <li>• What kind of eye problems should I be aware of?</li> <li>• How often should I have an eye exam?</li> </ul>
<b>Nephrologist (Kidney Doctor)</b>	A doctor who has special training in treating kidney diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can type 2 diabetes affect my kidneys?</li> <li>• How often should my kidney function be tested?</li> </ul>
<b>Podiatrist (Foot Doctor)</b>	Treats problems of the legs and feet, such as corns, calluses, and more serious problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often should I check my feet and what—if anything—should I be looking for?</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral Health Professional</b>	Trained to help people with the emotional aspects of living with type 2 diabetes. Could be a social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, or family/marriage therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I help myself be less depressed about having type 2 diabetes?</li> <li>• I am frustrated with my diagnosis; can you give me some advice?</li> </ul>
<b>Diabetes Nurse Educator</b>	A registered nurse whose main job is teaching you about diabetes and how to manage it on a daily basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do I use my test strips and meter?</li> <li>• How often should I test my blood sugar?</li> <li>• When should I take my medicine?</li> </ul>

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## Diabetes Health Professionals (cont'd)

Who?	Description	Sample Questions to Ask
<b>Nurse Practitioner</b>	A nurse with a graduate degree in advanced-practice nursing who can provide services that include diagnosing and managing conditions and writing prescriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any side effects I should be aware of?</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise Physiologist</b>	Has special training in the body and exercise, and will design a safe and effective exercise program that meets your specific needs. Make sure to have your PCP approve your exercise program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I haven't exercised in a long time. What should I do?</li> <li>• How often should I exercise and for how long?</li> <li>• What is the best time of day to exercise?</li> </ul>
<b>Physician's Assistant (PA)</b>	Works closely with the physician and provides diagnostic, preventive, wellness, and treatment services under his or her supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I get a flu shot even though I have type 2 diabetes?</li> <li>• What is low blood sugar?</li> </ul>
<b>Physician's Office Nurse</b>	Often the first person you see at the physician's office, he or she gathers important information for the physician and may also give you educational support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any information I can take home about type 2 diabetes?</li> <li>• Do you have something I can read about high blood pressure?</li> </ul>
<b>Pharmacist</b>	Knows about prescription and over-the-counter medicines, how they interact, and their effects on the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a new prescription. Will it interact with the things I am already taking?</li> <li>• Do OTC medicines have sugar in them?</li> </ul>
<b>Registered Dietitian</b>	Training in nutrition and has passed a national exam. Teaches you about healthy eating and will develop a diet plan that takes into account your medical conditions, lifestyle, and the goals you set with your healthcare providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm not sure what to eat. What is the best diet for me?</li> <li>• What types of fruits and vegetables are lowest in sugar?</li> <li>• Will diet help reduce or change the medications I take?</li> </ul>
<b>Office Manager/ Billing Staff</b>	Verifies insurance coverage and completes paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you file the insurance paperwork?</li> <li>• Are my visits here covered?</li> <li>• If my insurance changes, what information do you need from me?</li> </ul>

# My questions for my healthcare provider

Remember—always ask if you have questions! Your healthcare providers are there to help you.

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tip:** Make copies of this page to use each visit.

# TYPE 2 DIABETES (T2D) TREATMENT TRACKER

Keep track of your doctors and other care team members, medications, appointments, test results, blood sugar readings, and other important health information all in one place.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Diabetes Care Team

Who	Name	Phone Number
Primary Care Physician		
Diabetes Specialist		
Nutritionist or Dietitian		
Eye Doctor		
Foot Doctor		
Heart Doctor		
Kidney Doctor		
Dialysis Center		
Pharmacy		
Other:		
Other:		

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

This form is designed to collect personal health information and should be maintained to protect from inadvertent disclosure.

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## My Medications

Medication	Dose	Take At

List all the medications you are taking, not just those for type 2 diabetes. Remember to list over-the-counter medications such as painkillers, and vitamins and herbal supplements you may be taking.

## My Diabetes Tests

Test	Goal	Date/Value	Date/Value	Date/Value	Date/Value
A1C (average blood sugar)					
LDL (bad cholesterol)					
HDL (good cholesterol)					
Triglycerides (bad cholesterol)					
Total cholesterol					
Blood pressure					

Complete the numbers in the “goal” column with your healthcare professional.

This form is designed to collect personal health information and should be maintained to protect from inadvertent disclosure.

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## Visits to my Diabetes Care Team

Date of Visit	Care Team Member	Comments	Medication Updates

## Important Yearly Checkups

Who or What?	Date of Visit	Comments	Follow-ups
Foot check			
Eye check			
Dentist			
Vaccines			
Other:			

## Recent Hospitalizations

When?	Reason

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This form is designed to collect personal health information and should be maintained to protect from inadvertent disclosure.



# BLOOD GLUCOSE LOG FOR PATIENTS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

You may use this log to record your blood sugar (glucose) readings. If you have any questions, make sure to discuss them with your doctor or other member of your healthcare team.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_ My Doctor's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Glucose Log									
Date	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		Snack/Other		Comments
	Time	Reading	Time	Reading	Time	Reading	Time	Reading	

**Tip:** Make copies of this page to use each week.  
This form is designed to collect personal health information and should be maintained to protect from inadvertent disclosure.



# CAREGIVER FACT SHEET

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**If you are helping someone with type 2 diabetes**

# YOUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING A DIABETES MANAGEMENT PLAN

If you are helping to take care of someone with type 2 diabetes, you may already know that diabetes can be a hard thing to handle alone. There is a lot to learn about living with diabetes. Your loved one may have to change things about his or her lifestyle. This could include diet and exercise, smoking and drinking, and even how he or she deals with stress. Your loved one may have to take one or more types of medicine to help manage his or her type 2 diabetes. He or she may also be taking medicine for other conditions. Your loved one will have to have regular doctor visits. He or she may need to see a few types of healthcare providers.

There are things you can do to help your family member or friend. You can give support by listening and talking. You can also help someone take care of their diabetes. Both of those are important.



## You can help your family member or friend:

- Stick to his or her treatment, and
- Make smart choices about taking care of his or her diabetes

## Communication is key

**Listen** to your loved one's worries and fears about type 2 diabetes. **Talk** about what is on his or her mind, and help **address problems** when you can. Ask what you can do to help.

## Talk to healthcare providers

**Be part of the conversation with doctors** and other healthcare providers. You can help by writing down any questions, or helping your loved one write them down. Make sure to bring the list to visits. At the doctor's office, ask him or her to repeat anything that seems unclear. If it helps, take notes and review them later.

## A healthy diet makes a difference

One thing you can do is **help the person manage his or her diet**. Diet plays a big part in keeping blood sugar (glucose) at the right level. Diet also affects cholesterol, weight, and blood pressure.

## TWO WAYS YOU CAN HELP WITH DIET

- *Keep healthy foods available.* That includes plenty of fresh fruits and nonstarchy vegetables, beans, whole grains, lean meats, poultry, fish, and nonfat dairy. Limit the amount of junk food that is around to prevent temptation
- *Help with meal planning.* Learn how different foods affect blood sugar, know which foods are healthier to choose, learn how much to eat, and the best times to eat

## Help with daily blood sugar testing and medication

The goal for people with diabetes is to keep their blood sugar at the recommended level. You may help the person check their blood sugar, or provide emotional support for him or her. It is a good idea to write down the blood sugar level each time it is tested.

Some people have to take medicine that comes in either pill form or is injected. Medicine should be taken *exactly* as directed, even if the person feels good.

*The good news is that these are all good habits for everyone. The whole family can share in this healthier eating style. If you have questions, talk to a physician, nurse, or dietitian.*

## Get moving to lower blood sugar

Regular activity is part of managing diabetes. Exercise can help lower blood sugar, and it provides other benefits. Anything that gets a person moving on a regular basis is good. That could be walking with friends, dancing, gardening, or playing tennis. Since activity is great for everyone, you can join in. Always check with the doctor or healthcare team before starting an exercise routine.

## Encourage your loved one to stop smoking

People who smoke are more likely to have trouble controlling their blood sugar. Smokers with diabetes are also at higher risk for other problems. They can include heart and kidney disease, eye problems, and nerve damage to the arms and legs. For free information about help quitting, you or your loved one can go to [www.CDC.gov/tips](http://www.CDC.gov/tips) or speak to a healthcare provider.



## Be aware of problems before they start

You can help prevent some complications by just knowing about them and looking for them. People with diabetes are at greater risk for foot problems. They should check their legs and feet daily to see if there are any cuts or blisters. That is something that you can help with. Make sure that nails are kept trimmed, and that shoes fit comfortably.

Stress can raise blood sugar. While everyone has stress, it might be helpful for your loved one to find different ways to deal with stress. Depression can have an effect on whether someone sticks to their diabetes plan, so if that is a concern, make sure to mention it.

## Suggest a support group

Support groups help people realize that there are others with the same disease and offer useful ideas for coping. You can call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) to find local support groups, or log on to [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) and go to “In My Community.”

### ASK FOR HELP

Doctors and other healthcare providers are there to help. They can answer your questions, and also give you and your loved one or friend things to read about type 2 diabetes. You can also find useful resources online. Three reliable places to start are:

- The American Diabetes Association online at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- The National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC) online at [diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Diabetes Public Health Resource online at [www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)