



# Managing Diabetes

**Educational Handouts and Resources**

**Diabetes Dietetic Practice Group**

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*Managing Diabetes: Educational Handouts and Resources*

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# About This Resource

When counseling people with diabetes, an important goal for the practitioner is to empower clients or patients with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their diabetes. This set of downloadable handouts is a turnkey resource to support in-person and virtual education and counseling. Developed by the Diabetes Dietetic Practice Group, the handouts address a wide range of topics divided into three sections: Nutrition, Education, and Medications.

Each handout is designed to be interactive and engage the client by asking:

**“What do I need to know?”**

**“What do I need to do?”**

**“What is my action plan?”**

A checklist for identifying and customizing an action plan is provided, along with space for additional notes on each handout. Record-keeping handouts are also included. The handouts are created as fillable PDFs for ease in virtual counseling; they can also be printed.

We are confident that you will find this resource a welcome addition to your library of education and counseling materials.

Paula Kellogg Leibovitz, MS, RDN, CDCES, CDN  
Chair, 2020-2021

Diabetes Dietetic Practice Group  
[www.diabetesdpg.org](http://www.diabetesdpg.org)

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# Managing Diabetes

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## Nutrition



# Carbohydrate Counting Basics



## What Do I Need to Know?

Carbohydrates (carbs) are foods that contain starch and/or sugar and fiber. Carbs give you energy and provide nutrients. Eating too many carbs can cause your blood glucose (blood sugar) to go up.

Foods that contain carbs include:

- grains (breads, cereals, pasta, tortillas)
- starchy vegetables (peas, corn, potatoes, beans)
- fruits (and juices)
- milk and yogurt
- sweets and desserts
- nonstarchy vegetables (tomatoes, green beans, lettuce)—these have very small amounts of carbs

Carb counting is a meal planning method where you count the carb choices or the grams of carbohydrates that you eat at meals and snacks. It allows you to be flexible and eat a variety of foods. Eating about the same amount of carbs at meals can help keep blood glucose from rising too high or falling too low. When you count carbs, you use a meal plan and keep track of the number of carb choices or the carb grams you are eating.

**1 carbohydrate choice =  
about 15 grams of carbohydrates**

Here are examples of 1 carb choice:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 small piece of fruit
- ½ cup of ice cream
- ½ cup of potatoes
- 1 cup of milk
- ½ cup of casserole
- ⅓ cup of pasta or rice
- 6 ounces of plain yogurt
- 3 cups of popped popcorn

### Tip

Healthier carb choices are whole grain breads and cereals, beans, vegetables dairy, and whole fruit. Talk to your dietitian about how to include small amounts of sweets.

### Tip

Aim to eat about the same amount of carbs at each meal, unless you are adjusting your insulin dose based on your carb intake and blood glucose level.

# What Do I Need to Do?

**To begin counting carbs, you will need a meal plan.** A meal plan can help you know how many carbs, proteins, and fats to include in your meals and snacks. The number of carb choices in your meal plan is based on your health, your lifestyle goals, and your medications. If you don't have a meal plan, a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) or certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES) can help you create one.

**Use your carb choices for each meal or snack to plan the foods and amounts you will eat.** For example, if your meal plan includes 3 carb choices at breakfast, you might choose to eat 2 slices of whole grain toast (2 carb choices), scrambled eggs (no carbs), and a small apple (1 carb choice).

When using a Nutrition Facts label on a food item, consider the following:

- Check the serving size and decide if this is the amount you plan to eat.
- Look at the line that says Total Carbohydrates. This is the amount of carbs in 1 serving of food. (Note—sugars are included in this number, so do not count sugar separately.)
- If your actual serving is larger or smaller than the size on the label, figure the amount of carbs in your serving.
- Count the grams of carbs or carb choices you are eating.

**Spread your carbs over the entire day's meals and snacks.** Try to vary your carb choices and pick foods that have less effect on your blood glucose level, such as nonstarchy vegetables and protein foods. This also helps you to build balanced meals.

## My Action Plan

Choose 1 action or write your own:

- I will start measuring my carb foods, especially \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will check food labels for Total Carbohydrates amounts.
- I will aim to eat more \_\_\_\_\_ and less \_\_\_\_\_ to reduce my carbs.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Notes

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# Managing Diabetes

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## Medications



# Diabetes Medicines: Pills



## What Do I Need to Know?

You may need to take 1 or more medicines for your diabetes. These medicines include various pills, insulin, or non-insulin injections. Over time, medicines may be added or changed. Your healthcare provider may recommend pills that help lower A1C and keep blood glucose (blood sugar) levels in your target range.

## What Do I Need to Do?

**Learn about your medicines.** Know the generic and brand names, when to take it, what to do if you forget, and possible side effects.

**Keep an up-to-date list of your medicines and who prescribed them.** Share this list with a loved one in case of emergency.

**Keep others informed.** All of your healthcare providers may not talk to each other, so make sure they all know about the medicines you take.

**Store medicines in a cool, dry place.** Do not store medicines in the bathroom cabinet because moisture can damage them or make them less effective.

**Take medicines on time.** Set timers, create a schedule, or use apps to remind you when to take each medicine. Even if you are feeling fine, keep taking your medicine. If you are not feeling well and want to skip the medicine, check with your healthcare provider first.

**Simplify when you can.** If you take more than 1 diabetes pill, ask if there is a combination or extended-release pill instead. This can lower the number of pills you take.

**Refill on time.** Check your prescription bottles for the number of refills left. Request refills from the pharmacy at least 1 week before you run out.

## My Action Plan

Choose 1 action or write your own.

- I will create a list of my medicines and keep it \_\_\_\_\_, and I will share it with \_\_\_\_\_.
- In order to remember to take my medicines on time, I will \_\_\_\_\_.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Most Common Diabetes Pills

This chart includes many of the most common diabetes pills. You may be prescribed a single pill containing 2 drugs, meaning you will be taking 2 medicines combined into only 1 pill. Your diabetes educator can provide more information about these types of pills.

<i>How it works: Makes it easier for the body to respond to insulin</i>		
Generic Name (Brand)	How to Take It	Possible Side Effects
<b>Metformin</b> (Glucophage), <b>Metformin liquid</b> (Riomet) <b>Metformin extended release</b> (Glucophage XR, Fortamet, Glumetza)	Usually take 2 times a day with breakfast and evening meal.	Bloating, gas, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, cramping
<b>Pioglitazone</b> (Actos)	Take 1 pill a day, at the same time each day.	Weight gain, fluid retention and swelling, respiratory tract infection, headache
<i>How it works: Increases insulin release</i>		
Generic Name (Brand)	How to Take It	Possible Side Effects
<b>Glimepiride</b> (Amaryl) <b>Glyburide</b> (DiaBeta) <b>Glipizide</b> (Glucotrol, Glucotrol XL) <b>Micronized glyburide</b> (Glynase)	Take 1 or 2 times a day with food.	Weight gain, low blood glucose levels (especially in older adults who eat less or miss meals)
<b>Sitagliptin</b> (Januvia) <b>Saxagliptin</b> (Onglyza) <b>Linagliptin</b> (Tradjenta) <b>Alogliptin</b> (Nesina)	Take 1 pill a day, at the same time each day.	Stomach upset, diarrhea, nausea, headache, respiratory tract infection, joint pain
<i>How it works: Makes the body release glucose into the urine</i>		
Generic Name (Brand)	How to Take It	Possible Side Effects
<b>Canagliflozin</b> (Invokana) <b>Dapagliflozin</b> (Farxiga) <b>Empagliflozin</b> (Jardiance) <b>Ertugliflozin</b> (Steglatro)	Take 1 pill each day before the first meal of the day.	Weight loss, frequent urination, urinary tract infections, dehydration, genital yeast infections
<i>How it works: Increases insulin release to lower high blood glucose levels</i>		
Generic Name (Brand)	How to Take It	Possible Side Effects
<b>Semaglutide</b> (Rybelsus)	Take on an empty stomach with just a sip of water (and no other pills/supplements). Wait at least 30 minutes before eating, drinking or taking any other medication.	Nausea, stomach pain, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vomiting, and constipation

# Managing Diabetes

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## Education



# What is Prediabetes?



## What Do I Need to Know?

Prediabetes means your blood glucose (blood sugar) level is higher than normal, but it is not high enough for you to be diagnosed with diabetes. It means that you are at higher risk for developing diabetes, as well as heart disease or stroke.

You are at a higher risk for prediabetes if you have certain risk factors. Your risk increases if you:

- are 45 years old or older;
- are overweight or obese;
- spend most of your time sitting;
- have a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes;
- are Black, Hispanic or Latino, Indigenous American or American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander;
- have been diagnosed with high blood pressure or heart disease; or
- developed diabetes during a pregnancy.

Blood test results can show if you have prediabetes or diabetes. The chart below shows the results your healthcare provider will use to decide your diagnosis. For example, if your A1C test result is 6%, you may have prediabetes.

Test	Prediabetes	Diabetes	Your results
Fasting blood glucose	100 to 125 mg/dL	126 mg/dL or higher	
OGTT (oral glucose tolerance test)	140 to 199 mg/dL	200 mg/dL or higher	
A1C	5.7% to 6.4%	6.5% or higher	

## There Is Good News!

Research shows that lifestyle changes, including being more active and losing weight, can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes in over half of the patients with prediabetes. Any weight loss, even just 7% of your body weight, will help. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, losing 7% of your weight is 15 pounds. Weight loss can also improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

## What Do I Need to Do?

**Know your blood test results.** If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes, you should have these blood tests yearly or as often as recommended by your healthcare team.

**Move more.** Figure out how many minutes per week you are usually active, and start building up from there. Walk your dog after dinner. Dance or stretch during TV commercials. Ask your doctor what exercise level is safe for you.

**Lose weight.** Decide on a realistic weight goal for you. Figure out what losing 5% to 7% of your weight would be in pounds.

**Make healthy food choices.** Meet with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to develop a meal plan that meets your needs. For many people, the first step towards a better diet is to replace sugary drinks and juice with water or calorie-free drinks.

**Get to bed on time.** Lack of sleep can have a negative effect on the way the body uses insulin. Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

**Join a nationally certified diabetes prevention program (DPP).** This program follows a national model proven to help people reduce their risks of getting diabetes. It lasts about 1 year.

### Tip

**Regular physical activity is very important! Aim for at least 150 minutes each week. That can be reached by taking 5 walks for 30 minutes each. If you already meet that goal, push yourself to 200 minutes per week.**

### My Action Plan

Choose 1 action or write your own.

- I will include \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ times each week in my exercise plan.
- I will calculate a 7% weight loss goal, which is: \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will replace sugary drinks with \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will look to enroll in a DPP program.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Notes

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# My Diabetes Care Plan



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion Topics and Recommendations

Nutrition and Meal Planning/Physical Activity:

\_\_\_\_\_

Diabetes Medicines:

\_\_\_\_\_

Blood Glucose Monitoring:

\_\_\_\_\_

Foot Care:

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Today's Results

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Blood pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

A1C: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood glucose: \_\_\_\_\_

# My Action Plan

## Recommendations for follow-up and ongoing support:

- Registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)
- Diabetes education
- Pharmacist
- Flu shot and immunization updates
- Dental cleaning
- Eye exam (dilated)
- Foot care/podiatrist
- Mental health counselor
  
- Additional lab tests: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## For more help understanding and managing your diabetes, the following sources of information are available:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to find a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) for help with meal planning: **[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)** (click on “Find an Expert”)
- Diabetes education programs accredited by:
  - American Diabetes Association: **[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)** (800-342-2383)
  - Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists : **[www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)** (800-338-3633)
- National Diabetes Prevention Program: **[www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention)**

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