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Start your
summer with
healthy recipes
for the grill

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**TRAVEL TIPS
FOOT FACTS
A WORKOUT
GUIDE**

SUMMER 2015
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Summer 2015 CONTENTS



FIRE IT UP!

Summer is here—time to slow down, relax, and enjoy good food outdoors. Turn up the heat with healthy recipes for the grill and tips for the perfect picnic

*Cover: photography by Leigh Beisch;
food styling by Dan Becker;
prop styling by Glenn Jenkins*



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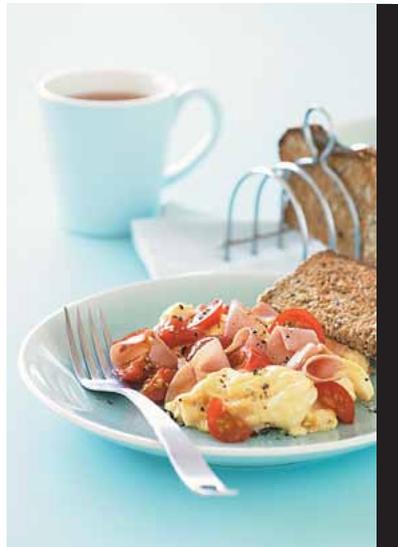
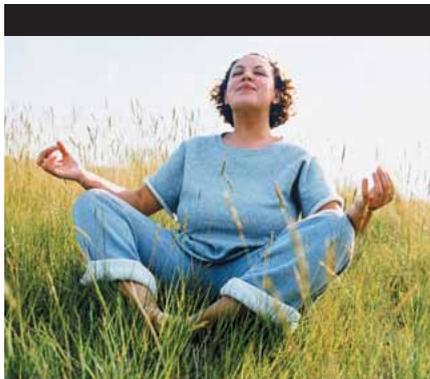
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OPEN YOUR MIND

Stressed out? Relax and say “ommm.” Meditation could relieve stress and lower your blood sugar. A group of overweight and obese women spent eight weeks in either a meditation-training program or a basic health-education program. At the end of the eight weeks, and another eight weeks after that, the women who had learned to meditate reported significantly lower stress levels than their peers. They had also significantly reduced their blood sugar and, according to a questionnaire, improved their quality of life. The health-education program didn’t provide either of those benefits.

Source: Penn State University College of Medicine



MORNING STAR

Breakfast may be especially important for people with type 2 diabetes. Two groups of people with type 2 diabetes consumed about 1,500 calories per day for six days. One group got 700 of those calories at breakfast and 200 at dinner; the other group got the reverse of that diet. Lunches were identical for both groups. Two weeks later, the groups switched diets. Researchers found that all-day blood sugar control was significantly better when study participants ate a big breakfast rather than a big dinner.

Source: *Diabetologia*

207

NUMBER OF CALORIES

a 50-year-old, 150-pound woman burns in 30 minutes of moderate swimming

Source: Health Status



SWEAT MORE

When it comes to controlling diabetes, even a little exercise can go a long way. In a study of more than 600,000 adults, those who exercised for any period of time at all on a consistent weekly basis had lower fasting blood sugar levels than their peers who did not exercise. Women who got some exercise each week also had lower blood pressure than their inactive counterparts. Men who exercised had lower diastolic blood pressure.

Source: *Preventing Chronic Disease*



FROM TOP: STEVE BROWN PHOTOGRAPH/GETTY IMAGES; A. GREEN/GLOW IMAGES; STUARTBUR/GETTY IMAGES; RACHEL FRANK/GLOW IMAGES

CRUNCH TIME?

Do you get the results you want from exercise? Try working out after dinner. A small group of obese adults with type 2 diabetes exercised with weights before dinner one day, 45 minutes after dinner another day, and took another day off. On both exercise days, the study participants had lower evening blood sugar levels than on the rest day. But the after-dinner workout group also had lower fat levels in their blood. Regular after-dinner workouts could help control diabetes and reduce risk for heart disease.

Source: *Journal of Applied Physiology*



FROM TOP: WESTEND/GLOW IMAGES; CARLOS GAWRONSKI/GETTY IMAGES; ERIK SAKSON/GLOW IMAGES

1 IN 3

NUMBER OF SMARTPHONE OWNERS

who use health and fitness apps. Many apps track blood sugar and physical activity.

Source: Nielsen

ON THE WHOLE

Weight loss isn't the only important health consideration for people with diabetes. About 100 people with prediabetes participated in a 14-week health coaching program that focused on improving diet, exercise, stress, and sleep. At the end of the program, half had lowered their blood sugar back to healthy levels—whether or not they lost weight. They also improved their sleeping habits, reduced fatigue levels, and lowered stress. Talk to your health care provider not only about diet and exercise but also about stress management and a good night's sleep.

Source: American College of Cardiology



1

NUMBER OF TEASPOONS

of cassia cinnamon per day—in your food or in a capsule—that could help lower blood sugar and cholesterol

Source: *Annals of Family Medicine*

SLEEP SENSE

Think you can catch up on sleep on the weekends? New research shows the importance of a good night's sleep every night. Some 365 people with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes logged their sleep times each night for a week. Those who slept the same number of hours every night were nearly 75% less likely to be obese than those who slept just 30 minutes less on weeknights than on weekends. Six and 12 months later, the diabetes of those who slept less on weeknights had progressed more than the diabetes of those whose sleep was consistent throughout the week.

Source: Endocrine Society



Tool Check

What you need to measure your blood sugar

BY SONYA COLLINS



ASK YOUR DOCTOR
Can you check to see if I'm using my blood sugar meter correctly?

Is my A1c (the average level of blood sugar over the past three months) at goal? If not, what can I do to get it there?

What are the best times to test my blood sugar?

What should my blood sugar be before and after meals?

If you've just been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you'll need some supplies to help you manage your blood sugar. These include:

Blood Sugar Meter

Also called a glucose meter or monitor, this device measures how much sugar (or glucose) is in a drop of your blood. The meter can tell you when your sugar is too low or too high. Talk to your doctor about what to do in those situations. Glucose meters can also show you how diet, exercise, stress, sickness, and your medications affect blood sugar.

"Get the [one] that you feel comfortable and confident using," says Jane Seley, a diabetes nurse practitioner at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

Make sure the screen is large enough to read. Choose one that requires less than a microliter blood sample. "It's much more comfortable," Seley says. "You don't have to stick yourself as deep. It's much easier to be successful, and you won't waste as many test strips."

Consider a meter that can download your readings to your smartphone, tablet, or computer. "You can see charts of how your blood sugars differ throughout the day," Seley says. "It helps you make better decisions about things like when to exercise and what to have for breakfast."

Test Strips, Lancets, and Lancet Device

Each small plastic strip contains chemicals that convert the sugar in your blood into an electric current that your meter can read. Wash your hands first, then put a test strip into your meter. Prick the side of your

fingertip with a small needle called a lancet. The lancet fits inside a lancet device. About the shape and size of a pen, it's spring-loaded to help you prick your finger easily with just the right amount of pressure. You then squeeze a single drop of blood onto the strip, and your meter measures the sugar.

If you're not taking insulin, your insurance might cover only a limited number of test strips. Medicare covers about one a day. Ask your health care provider how you can best use your strips to learn how meals, exercise, and rest affect your blood sugar.

Sharps Containers

Put lancets in sharps containers before they go in the trash. You can get inexpensive sharps containers at the drugstore. Or use bleach or detergent bottles made of thick plastic that you can't see through, Seley says.



Read [Care of Blood Sugar Test Supplies](#) at [WebMD.com](#).

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REVIEWED BY AREFA CASSOOBHOY, MD, MPH, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR

BSIP/GETTY IMAGES

Flight Plan

Air travel can affect your blood sugar. Fly safely with these tips BY MICHELE COHEN MARILL

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

How often should I check my glucose while traveling?

Are there any special adjustments I need to make if my blood sugar is high or low while I'm traveling?

How should I adjust my medication for time zone changes?

If I travel outside the United States, do I need to take any special precautions or have any other medications?



Read [Tips for Dining Out With Diabetes](#) at [WebMD.com](#).

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You dream of a vacation—spending a week on a beach, hiking in the mountains, or exploring a faraway city. If your trip involves a flight, you might wonder how type 1 diabetes will complicate the hassles of air travel. But if you plan well, diabetes doesn't have to keep you grounded.

True, flight delays and changes in routine—even the hours spent sitting rather than being active—can affect your blood sugar. You can compensate with more frequent blood-glucose testing and by keeping a handy stash of snacks and drinks, says Davida Kruger, MSN, a nurse practitioner with the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit and author of *The Diabetes Travel Guide*.

Your trip planning should include strategies to manage your diet and medications. A month or more before your flight, talk to your doctor or diabetes educator about your itinerary, including time zone changes. “I try to get people on their new schedule as quickly as possible if there’s a time change,” Kruger says. In general, traveling east across time zones will mean the day is shorter and you will need less insulin. The reverse is true when traveling west. Kruger also offers this advice for stress-free traveling.

Pack insulin, supplies, and snacks in a carry-on bag. Your checked luggage will be exposed to extreme temperatures in the plane’s cargo section, and it could get misplaced. People with type 1 diabetes are allowed to take more than the standard limit of 3.4 ounces of liquid per item through security. You can take as much insulin and supplies as you need.

Keep the items separate from your nonmedical liquids, with their medical labels showing. Ask your doctor or diabetes educator to give you a letter explaining the



medications and supplies you need, in case you are questioned by airport security.

Bring backup supplies. “I tell people to pack twice as much as they need of everything,” Kruger says. That includes an extra glucose monitor and extra batteries. If you wear a pump, bring insulin and syringes in case the pump stops working. Pack a glucagon emergency kit, which contains medicine to be mixed with liquid in a syringe in case you need to respond quickly to low blood sugar.

Notify the security screener that you have diabetes. You can go through a screening device with your pump or choose a private pat-down. Even if you go through a screening device, you may be asked to touch the pump and then have your hand tested for explosive residue.

If you have any problems, ask to speak to a Passenger Support Specialist, a TSA officer who has special training in assisting people with health conditions.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL W. SMITH, MD, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

Fresh Eats

Swap difficult diets for good and simple healthy foods.

Here's how BY MATT McMILLEN

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What foods should I start eating?

Can I eat the foods I normally eat, or do I need to cut back on some?

Should I reduce portion sizes and by how much?

Will weight loss help and how much should I lose?

How do I deal with hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)?



Find diabetes-friendly meals with the [Healthy Recipe Finder](#) at WebMD.com.

LEARN HOW ON PAGE 3

To keep diabetes in check, you need to eat well. That means choosing healthy foods and portion sizes so that you can control both your weight and blood sugar levels. The first step: Learn what's good for you, says diabetes educator Emmy Suhl, MS, RD, CDE, of Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston.

"There's no such thing as a diabetes diet," Suhl says. "The best diet for someone with diabetes is your basic, healthy diet."

Carbohydrates

Every diet should include some carbohydrates, which provide energy to help power your body. But look for healthy carbs that won't cause your blood sugar to spike. "A lot of carbohydrates are very healthy, such as fruits, vegetables, milk, yogurt, and legumes," Suhl says. "Try to avoid as much as possible refined and/or heavily processed carbohydrates."

Suhl's quick tips:

- Eat whole grains such as barley and brown rice rather than white rice and white-flour pasta.
- Look for packages that say 100% whole grain.
- Eat fruits rather than drink fruit juice, even if it's 100% juice.

Protein

Your body needs protein to build and maintain bone, muscles, and skin and to perform a host of other bodily functions. As with carbs, make a point to choose healthy sources of protein.

"Your best choices are lean meats like chicken, low-fat dairy, and fish and shellfish," Suhl says. "All are much healthier than proteins from four-legged animals."

- Skip steaks and other meats you can eat rare—they have more fat than other meat.
- Salmon's a great choice, but all fish contain protein.

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR



Dairy

Milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products provide protein, calcium, and other nutrients, but they can also contain a lot of fat. "I would recommend 1%," Suhl says. "You want some fat in your diet, but you don't want dairy fat. You want fat from healthier sources."

- Go Greek. Greek yogurt has more protein and fewer carbs than regular yogurt. Look for a nonfat variety.
- Eat plain yogurt and add fresh fruit, such as berries.

Fat

While your diet must include some fat, focus on healthy sources such as plant-based fats, Suhl says. Animal fats contribute to heart disease, a particular danger for people with diabetes.

- Eat avocados and nuts for healthy fats.
- Even healthy fats have lots of calories, so eat them in moderation.

TAKE CARE

Here are three musts for exercising with diabetes:

Check your glucose levels.

You may see a drop during or after a workout. Levels may also spike during or after a high-intensity exercise. Test your blood sugar before and after your training sessions to learn how your body reacts to different activities.

Pack a snack.

If your levels are low (100 mg/dl or lower) before you work out, have a pre-exercise snack. Always carry a small carbohydrate snack, juice, or glucose tabs in case your blood glucose levels fall too much.

Know when to draw the line. If your glucose is high before your session, test your blood or urine for ketones. If the test is positive, don't do anything vigorous.



Watch the [Diabetes and the Power of Exercise](#) video at [WebMD.com](#).

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Personal Best

Stay active with a trainer who can help manage your condition BY KARA MAYER ROBINSON

Being active can lower your blood glucose levels and keep your health on track. If you're not sure where to begin, a personal trainer can pave the way.

Choose a qualified trainer with experience working with people with diabetes. You can find a certified personal trainer through the National Strength and Conditioning Association ([nsc.com](#)), the American College of Sports Medicine ([acsm.org](#)), or the American Council on Exercise ([acefitness.org](#)).

Think of your trainer as a coach, educator, and confidant. He will design an exercise program that matches your fitness level. You'll meet on a regular basis, probably two or three days a week. You'll work out alongside him, either in your home or at a gym.

Your trainer will help you carry out your plan safely and consistently. He'll walk you through different exercises, making sure you use proper form. He'll show you how to lift weights safely and can teach you how to use cardio equipment properly.

"A trainer can help you stay focused and on track," says certified personal trainer John

Saeger, president of GroundWorks Fitness in Doylestown, Ohio. Plus, with regular meeting times, it's tough to bail on working out.

Make the most of your personal training with these tips.

Make a plan. Before you start, develop an action plan with your doctor about how to respond to low blood sugar. If your levels repeatedly drop during or after exercise, talk to your doctor.

Be present. "When you show up for your session, give 100% of your attention," Saeger says. Ignore distractions, and keep your focus on your exercises.

Be steady. A session here and there won't help you get fit. To see results, you have to be consistent. Create a regular training schedule that fits into your daily life.

Be open. If something doesn't feel right, tell your trainer. "He's there to help you and provide answers," Saeger says. Let him know if you have any concerns.

Be mindful of your limits. Keep an eye on your blood glucose. You may have to eat a snack or avoid intense exercises.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL W. SMITH, MD, CPT, WEBMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR



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FIRE *It*

BY KERRI-ANN JENNINGS

Summer is here. Here's what to grill, pack, and skip—and how to stay active



Whether you fire up the grill or pack a picnic basket, summer meals offer a time to slow down, relax, and enjoy good food outdoors. How can you make your summer cookouts and picnics healthier? Margaret A. Powers, PhD, RD, research scientist at the International Diabetes Center at Park Nicollet in Minneapolis, offers these tips for delicious, good-for-you summer meals.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEIGH BEISCH
FOOD STYLING BY DAN BECKER
PROP STYLING BY GLENN JENKINS

Up!



GRILL

Colorful, chunky vegetable bites:

If you've joined a Community Supported Agriculture group or community garden, you might have new-to-you vegetables cropping up in your weekly share. Grilling is an easy, flavorful way to try new veggies, since it adds a robust, smoky flavor without extra fat or salt. "Grilled vegetables are a tasty, inviting finger food on their own, added to kebabs, or folded into salads," Powers says.

Lean meats: Trim fat from meat before grilling to decrease the flare-ups that can create cancer-causing compounds. Trimming also lowers total calories and saturated fat.

Low-fat sausages: In addition to skinless chicken, seafood, and lean cuts of meat, Powers suggests low-fat sausages such as turkey sausage and brats. "Because people also use mustard and other toppings, they don't even realize they're eating a healthier version of the classics."

Pizza: Making pizza at home is fun—and generally healthier than eating it out. Grill whole wheat flatbreads or pizza dough and top with grilled vegetables and a sprinkle of cheese.

Chicken Kebabs With Yogurt-Lime Marinade

These chicken kebabs get their kick from a citrusy yogurt marinade. Serve with fresh herbs like mint, basil, tarragon, and cilantro plus extra plain yogurt and lime wedges.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp grated ginger
1 tsp ground turmeric
(optional, for color)
juice of 2 limes
(about 1/3 cup)
1 cup plain yogurt
salt and black
pepper to taste
1 lb boneless,
skinless chicken
breasts, cut into
1-inch pieces
2 zucchini, sliced
into 1/2-inch rounds

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine garlic, ginger, turmeric, lime juice, yogurt, and salt and pepper in a large freezer bag. Add chicken cubes to bag and seal the bag, massaging to coat. Refrigerate at least one hour or overnight.
2. Thread chicken cubes and zucchini rounds on metal skewers. Prepare grill surface with nonstick cooking spray and heat grill to medium-high heat. Grill until chicken is cooked through and zucchini is tender, turning skewers occasionally, about 10 to 15 minutes.

PER SERVING

268 calories, 36 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 10 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 105 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 275 mg sodium.
Calories from fat: 33%



Check out the **Easy, Tasty Grilled Foods for Dinner Tonight** slideshow at WebMD.com.

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Grilled Romaine Salad With Citrus Herb Vinaigrette

This time, forget the usual green salad. Grilling crunchy Romaine lettuce imparts a satisfying smoky flavor. Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

Salad

2 Romaine hearts, halved lengthwise
2 tsp olive oil

Dressing

2 tbsp chopped herbs (use what you have—parsley, mint, dill, cilantro)
2 tbsp lemon juice
¼ cup olive oil
1 tsp honey
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Brush cut side of Romaine hearts with 2 tsp olive oil. Bring grill to high heat and place Romaine, cut side down, directly on the grill. Cook a minute or two, until leaves are slightly charred. Remove from the grill and slice crosswise into ribbons. Transfer to a serving bowl and toss with dressing.
2. To prepare dressing: In a small jar with a lid, combine dressing ingredients. Put on lid and shake until combined.

PER SERVING

160 calories, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 16 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 2 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 149 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 88%

PACK

Low-carb veggie sides: Whether you pack a picnic to share or bring a side dish for a cookout, Powers recommends dishes with nonstarchy vegetables, which fill you up without adding to your carb quota.

Healthy starches: You can also bring the starchy side, such as potato salad or pasta salad, so that you know exactly how to count it. Make sure to load up the dish with lots of crunchy vegetables (celery, onions, peppers) and use low-fat mayo and/or plain yogurt to cut the fat.

LEAVE OUT

Too many carbs: Foods like burger buns and chips can tip the carb scales. Choose the ones you really want, and ditch the ones you don't.

Fatty meats: Burgers, sausages, and skin-on chicken ratchet up the saturated-fat content of your meal.

Sneaky salads: Mayonnaise-laden, carb-heavy salads are the primary gut-busters of summer food. While they're OK in small amounts, limit these foods and fill your plate with nonstarchy vegetables.



Take the **What to Eat If You Have Diabetes** quiz at WebMD.com.

LEARN HOW ON PAGE 3

Brown Sugar Grilled Plums With Vanilla Bean Fromage Blanc

Plums take on a sublime tartness when grilled. Brown sugar and vanilla-bean-flecked fromage blanc lend a touch of sweetness that perfectly complements the plums and makes this taste like a much more decadent, rich dessert than it is.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 12 plums, halved and pitted
- 8 oz fat-free fromage blanc, softened at room temperature
- 1 vanilla bean
- 1 tbsp honey

DIRECTIONS

1. Coat grill with cooking spray and preheat to medium-high.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together melted butter and brown sugar. Brush mixture over the cut side of plums. Grill plums, cut side down, 5 minutes, until soft. Set aside.
3. Put fromage blanc in a small bowl. Split the vanilla bean down the center with the tip of a sharp knife. Scrape seeds out of the pod into fromage blanc. Mix seeds and honey into fromage blanc. Spoon onto grilled plums to serve.

PER SERVING

116 calories, 4 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 14 mg cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 16 g sugar, 97 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 32%

STAY ACTIVE

Move more: Even people with limited mobility can throw a baseball or bocce ball, Powers says. Or go for a walk before or after your meal. Take advantage of the weather and get moving together.

Get involved: If you're at a cookout, join in the meal prep—chop vegetables, monitor the flame, or flip the veggies and meat.

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR





Stop Signs

How to keep prediabetes from becoming diabetes BY WINNIE YU

Have you or perhaps a family member just received a prediabetes diagnosis? This is a serious wake-up call, but it doesn't have to mean diabetes will develop. You can take steps to turn things around.

"It's an opportunity to initiate lifestyle changes or treatments, and potentially retard progression to diabetes or even prevent diabetes," says Gregg Gerety, MD, chief of endocrinology at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany, N.Y. These changes to familiar, daily habits are a good way to start.

Move more. Hands down, exercise is one of the best things you can do to make diabetes less likely. "Physical activity is an essential part of the treatment plan for prediabetes, because it lowers blood glucose levels and decreases body fat," says Patti B. Geil, MS, RD, co-author of *What Do I Eat Now? A Step-by-Step Guide to Eating Right With Type 2 Diabetes*.

If you haven't exercised in a while, start by building more activity into your day. Take the stairs or do steps in place during TV commercials. Ideally, you should exercise at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Let your doctor know about your exercise plans and ask if you should consider any special factors or limitations.

Lose weight. If you're overweight, you might not have to lose as much as you think to make a difference. In one recent study, people who had prediabetes and lost 5% to 7% of their body weight (just 10 to 14 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds) trimmed their chances of developing diabetes by 58%.

Check in more often. A good rule of thumb is to see your doctor every three to six months, Gerety says. The payoff is

twofold: If you're doing well, you get positive reinforcement from your doctor. And if the condition is not going so well, your doctor can help you get on track.

Step up to better nutrition. Geil suggests several ways you can improve your diet. Load up on vegetables, especially the less starchy kinds such as spinach, broccoli, carrots, and green beans. Aim for at least three servings a day. Add more high-fiber foods to your meals. Enjoy fruit in moderation, about one to three servings per day. And choose whole grains over processed grains—for example, brown rice instead of white rice.

Also, swap high-calorie foods. "Drink skim milk rather than whole milk, diet soda rather than regular soda," Geil says. "Choose lower-fat versions of cheese, yogurt, and salad dressings."

Occasional snacks are fine too, but trade the high-fat, high-calorie chips and desserts for fresh fruit, or whole wheat crackers with peanut butter or low-fat cheese, Geil says.

Make sleep a priority. Plenty of quality shut-eye is essential for many reasons, but not getting enough sleep on a regular basis plays havoc with your health—and your weight. Too little sleep makes losing weight harder, says Theresa Garnero, a diabetes nurse educator and author of *Your First Year With Diabetes: What to Do, Month by Month*. A sleep shortfall also makes it harder for your body to use insulin effectively and may make diabetes more likely.

Create some good sleep habits and stick with them. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Relax before you turn out the lights. Don't watch TV or use your tech devices when you're trying to fall asleep.

START NOW

The right mind-set and support can help you make a change. Here's how to get started.

Choose and commit. Accept that you won't do things perfectly every day, but pledge to do your best most of the time. "Make a conscious choice to be consistent with everyday activities that are in the best interest of your health," says Theresa Garnero, a diabetes nurse educator. "Tell yourself, 'I'm going to give it my best. I'm going to make small changes over time.'"

Get support. Losing weight, eating healthy meals, and exercising regularly are easier if you have people who hold you accountable, says Ronald T. Ackermann, MD, MPH. Join a group to be in the company of others with similar goals.



Feet First

Protect against nerve damage and infection

BY CHRISTINA BOUFIS

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What kinds of foot changes should I watch for?

How should I inspect my feet?

What should I do about trimming my nails?

What can I do to protect my feet?

What can I do about dry skin on my feet?

How often should I see you for a foot inspection?



Check out the [What Your Feet Say About Your Health](#) slideshow at WebMD.com.

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You may not give your feet much thought, but when you have diabetes, they deserve your full attention. Over time, high blood sugar can damage nerves in the feet, causing you to lose sensation—a condition called neuropathy, says podiatrist Robert W. Herpen, DPM, assistant professor at Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia. Neuropathy can also cause burning, pain, or tingling.

In addition, too much sugar in the blood damages arteries, decreasing blood flow to your feet. “If you have an injury [such as a cut], you’re not able to respond with enough blood flow to handle the infection,” he says. This could lead to an uncontrolled infection, gangrene (tissue death), bone infection, or even amputation.

Having diabetes doesn’t mean you’re destined for foot complications. “But you have to maintain vigilance,” Herpen says.

First up? Keep blood sugar levels under control by eating healthy meals, watching carbs, exercising regularly, and losing weight if you need to, Herpen says.

Next? “Do daily inspections of your feet,” Herpen says. Use a mirror to see them better. Or ask a relative or friend for help, he advises. Look closely for any changes in skin color, and any cuts, corns, calluses, blisters, or ingrown toenails. If you do have corns or calluses, “Don’t try to take care of it yourself,” he says. “You could cut yourself.” Instead, see your podiatrist or doctor.

Daily foot hygiene is as crucial as daily foot inspections. Wash your feet and make sure the water is lukewarm, Herpen says. Use a mild soap. Dry feet gently, and use lotion to moisturize—though not between your toes, as the extra moisture can lead to infection.

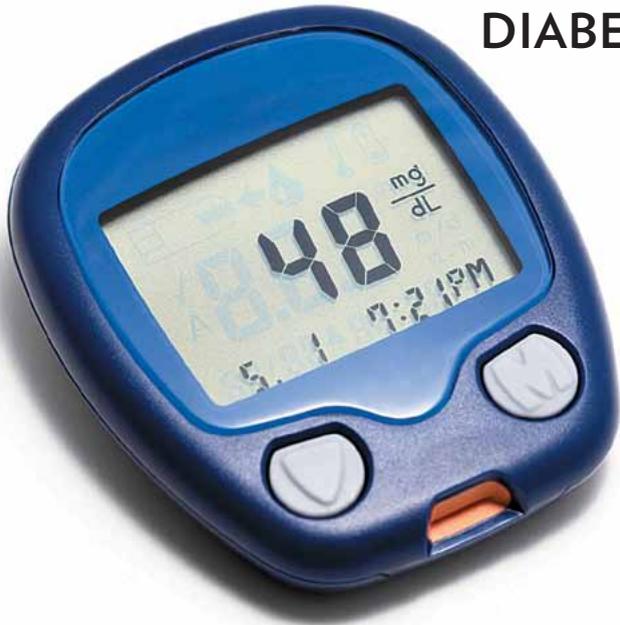
What else can you do to avoid complications? Never go barefoot even in your home, Herpen says. You might step on something without knowing it and injure your foot. “Wear white socks,” he advises. “If you have a sore or blister you’ll see it drain in the sock” and be alerted to problems sooner.

Wear shoes that fit properly, Herpen says. Look for comfortable shoes with extra padding and supple leather to avoid rubbing that could create blisters. “The most important thing is that you’re fitted for the shoe.” And if your doctor recommends it, wear special shoes made for those with diabetes, he adds, as the condition can change the shape of your feet.

If you do develop neuropathy, medications may help, Herpen says. But you can prevent foot problems by keeping blood sugar under control, inspecting your feet daily and practicing foot hygiene, and seeing your doctor or podiatrist at least every 12 months for a foot exam, advises the American Diabetes Association. Visit the doctor more often if you have any foot problems, Herpen says.

“We see people who are 80 or 90 years old whose feet are fine because they’ve watched their blood sugar,” Herpen says. “And they see a podiatrist if anything develops.”

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR



DIABETES: ARE YOU IN CONTROL?

If you have diabetes, monitoring and managing your blood sugar levels to keep the disease from getting worse are crucial. “Diabetes complications are preventable,” notes WebMD Diabetes Community member **NutriJoy**, “but that requires a genuine commitment on your part to make whatever lifestyle changes are needed to lower your blood glucose levels as close to ‘normal’ as possible.” Is your diabetes under control? Take this quiz to find out.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What kinds of dietary and fitness changes should I make to stay healthy?

What other doctors and medical professionals should I see? How often?

Will I need to have injections like insulin or take medications? If so, how often?

How do I avoid complications? What do I need to be aware of?

QUIZ

1. I follow a diabetes food plan:

- Every day
- Some days
- I don't have a food plan

2. I check my feet for cuts and sores:

- Daily
- Sometimes
- When my doctor reminds me

3. I exercise:

- Regularly, checking my blood sugar before and after
- Rarely or not at all

4. I check my blood sugar levels:

- Per my doctor's instructions
- When it's convenient
- I rarely remember

Answers: **1.** A healthy diet and regular exercise are the cornerstones of maintaining good blood sugar levels and controlling type 2 diabetes. If you don't have a diabetes food plan, ask your doctor about seeing a dietitian or nutritionist who specializes in creating these. **2.** Chronically elevated blood sugars can damage the nerves, including those in your feet, which can make it hard to feel pain. Diabetes can also damage circulation to your feet, making it harder for sores to heal. To prevent foot problems, check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Take care of your nails and skin and wear shoes that fit properly. **3.** Regular exercise helps maintain blood sugar levels and keep you fit. Get 30 to 60 minutes of activity on most days of the week. Before changing your level of routine physical activity, however, check with your doctor. **4.** Monitor your blood glucose the way your doctor tells you to. High blood sugar can make you feel thirsty and tired, cause blurry vision, or make you urinate often. Low blood sugar can make you feel weak, tired, confused, or shaky.

SOURCES:

American National Diabetes Education Program, WebMD Diabetes Health Center

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR

Support System

What you can do for a loved one with diabetes BY GINA SHAW

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What are realistic goals for my partner's diabetes control?

What lifestyle changes can we make that can help my partner be generally healthier and better able to cope with diabetes?

What can I do if my partner is "noncompliant" with diabetes care?

What resources do you have for me? Can you recommend books or local support groups?

In what situations should I take my partner to the hospital or call 911?



Read *Get Support for Your Type 2 Diabetes* at WebMD.com.

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If your spouse or partner has diabetes, you may sometimes feel like you worry more about the condition and the care than he or she does.

John Zrebiec, LICSW, director of behavioral health services at Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston, says he sees a lot of this. "You can cheerlead and encourage and support, but you can't just take over and do it for them. That can lead to a great deal of worry."

Even so, you don't have to sit helplessly on the sidelines. "Research is very clear that the more support a person with diabetes gets from their family members, the easier it is for them to manage it," Zrebiec says. "But for each person, the question of what *support* looks like may be different." So what can you do?

Talk with your spouse about what he needs from you and the other people around him. "For example, when your spouse has low blood sugar, what does he want you to do? Run and get juice? Say something? If so, what? What words, what tone?" Zrebiec asks.

"For some people, if their spouse goes with them to the supermarket and keeps an eye on everything in the basket, it feels nurturing and supportive. For others, it really makes them mad." Talk about your partner's needs and expectations when things are calm, so when something like a low blood sugar episode hits, you're prepared.

Focus on the positive. "People with diabetes can be really self-critical and self-blaming," Zrebiec says. "It helps if their partners and family members can counterbalance that by reminding them of the positive steps they've taken."

Understand what realistic goals are. "Often, family members think that if you do everything you're supposed to, you'll have perfect blood sugar control," he says. "So, if it's not perfect, the person with diabetes must be doing something wrong. But you can do



everything you're supposed to do and still get blood sugar numbers that make no sense."

Encourage your spouse to focus on rewards rather than consequences.

"Consequences and complications don't motivate someone for long. It's what you get out of something that motivates you, not what you lose if you don't do it," Zrebiec says. So instead of warning your spouse about foot amputation or blindness, remind him about what he loves and wants to be able to do, like playing golf more or walking your daughter down the aisle.

Find support for you. Look for support groups at your diabetes center or online. You can start with the American Diabetes Association's "I Love Someone With Diabetes" message board or WebMD's Diabetes Community.

REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR

Q

How can weight loss help me manage diabetes? What are the top weight-loss strategies you recommend?



Caroline M. Apovian, MD
 director of nutrition
 and weight
 management,
 Boston Medical
 Center

A

You don't have to lose a lot of weight to see a big improvement in diabetes. Trimming just 5% to 10% of your body weight will help you feel better, gain more control over the condition, and reduce the amount of medicines you take. And if you can lose weight within five years of getting diagnosed, you can reverse it.

My first tip would be to talk with your doctor about diabetes drugs. Some medicines that control your blood sugar, like glipizide (Glucotrol) and glyburide (DiaBeta), can make you gain weight. A better option may be a drug like metformin (Glucophage) or sitagliptin (Januvia), which will help you manage diabetes and lose a few pounds. Or you can try a newer diabetes medicine like liraglutide (Victoza), which will help you feel full so you may eat less. Exenatide (Byetta, Bydureon) and canagliflozin (Invokana) can also help you lose weight.

Some drugs you take to control blood pressure can hinder your efforts to lose weight, so check with your doctor to make sure yours isn't undermining your weight-loss goals.

Diet and exercise should be a big part of your weight-loss strategy. The goal with diet is to reduce the number of calories you eat each day. In general, women should eat 1,200 to 1,500 calories, and men should get 1,500 to 1,800 calories per day. Try adding extra protein from healthy sources like fish, chicken, and yogurt. Protein will fill you up for a longer period of time than carbs.

Exercise can help you lose weight (and keep it off), control your blood sugar, and manage diabetes. Do any activity that will help you burn 2,500 calories a week—that's equal to a brisk walk one hour a day for five days of the week.

If you still struggle to lose weight and you have a body mass index (BMI) higher than 27 along with diabetes, ask your doctor about a weight-loss drug such as phentermine and topiramate (Qsymia), lorcaserin (Belviq), liraglutide 3 milligrams (Saxenda), or naltrexone and bupropion (Contrave). Along with diet and exercise, these medicines can help you lose at least another 5% of your body weight.

If your BMI is over 35, weight-loss surgery is an option—ask your doctor about the various techniques. These aren't a magic weight-loss fix, though. You'll still need to change your lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise.

A newer alternative to surgery is VBLOC, which uses an implanted pacemaker-like device to block the nerve that regulates hunger, making you feel fuller sooner.



Check out the *Obesity and Diabetes Around the World* slideshow at WebMD.com.

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REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD, WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR

Italian Style

A pasta lover makes some changes to his diet

BY JARROD HOLLAND, WEBMD.COM COMMUNITY MEMBER



I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes four years ago when I was 36. I noticed I'd get up to go to the bathroom a couple of times a night, something I'd never done before, and that was the trigger that something was wrong.

My doctor ordered lab work and then I knew. My grandmother had type 2 diabetes, my uncle has it, and now I do. I'm Italian, and I grew up eating rich Italian foods such as ravioli and other homemade pastas. For someone who loves to eat, finding out I had diabetes felt like a cruel trick.

But after I was diagnosed, I completely changed my diet and lifestyle. I went to the American Diabetes Association website and looked up what foods I could eat and started eating only low-carb foods. I counted carbs—15 carbs for every snack

and 45 for meals. I gave up bread, pasta, even most cheeses. And though I'm not a big exerciser, I got on the treadmill for 30 minutes every night.

JARROD'S TIPS

"Try to distract yourself from cravings. Eat an apple or a few carrots. Or try a pickle, which for me, kills the craving for sweets."

"Enlist support. My wife has been a huge help. She cooks healthy, low-carb meals and provides lots of encouragement."

"Get online and go to diabetes forums. Millions of others struggle with the exact same things you're facing."

I lost 50 pounds in about 4 months—the weight just fell off of me. My A1c [an average of blood glucose measurements over time] went down, and I felt great.

But then after six months, I got burned out. I missed the big homemade Italian meals my mother and grandmother used to make. So I started cheating on the weekends. Monday morning I'd be back to counting carbs and eating lots of vegetables and protein. But I'd gain a few pounds over the weekend, and lose them during the week. This yo-yoing wasn't healthy.

Eventually I just went back to eating whatever food I wanted, like pizza, cheeseburgers, and fries. My A1c shot up to 10. I started getting neuropathy in my feet—it feels like you have a blister on the inside rather than the outside of your foot. I even had pains in the upper part of my stomach, and I knew I needed to do something.

Now I'm trying to eat healthier and lose the weight I gained back. I've found that what works for me is to eat several small meals and snacks during the day, so I never let myself get too hungry. I'll snack on a handful of almonds, beef jerky, or a protein-rich granola bar. At night if I'm hungry, I'll make a salad with just vinegar for dressing. Or eat a handful of apple slices.

I try to do a brisk walk every day to lose weight. I also realized that eating rich comfort foods was triggered by stress. So I'm finding better ways to cope.

I know that when I'm eating healthier, I feel so much better. My A1c is around 7 now. My energy is a lot higher. And I don't feel tired. My body responds when I eat better.