

Frequently Asked Questions About Type 2 Diabetes

Below are some issues you may want to discuss with your diabetes health care team.

1. What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease of high blood sugar. Your blood sugar is out of balance. When you have diabetes, your body is not able to keep your blood sugar level at a healthy balance on its own. Having high blood sugar for a long time can cause health problems.

2. Why does blood sugar get too high?

Sugar can build up in the blood because:

- Your body doesn't make enough insulin or it cannot use the insulin it produces properly
- Your liver makes more sugar than your body needs

3. How do I treat my diabetes?

A well-balanced diet, exercise, and a healthy weight can help you manage your blood sugar level. To take care of your diabetes, your doctor may tell you that you need to make some lifestyle changes. You might need to:

- Change the way you eat
- Become more active
- Lose some weight
- Take medicine every day

4. What happens if my blood sugar stays too high?

When too much sugar stays in your blood for a long time, it can damage your:

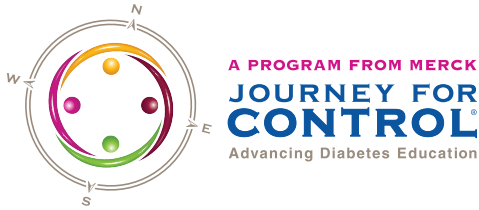
- Blood vessels
- Nerves
- Kidneys
- Eyes
- Feet
- Heart

5. How frequently should I test my blood sugar?

Some people need to test once a day; others need to test several times a day. Your doctor will tell you how many times a day you should test your blood sugar and which method is right for you.

6. What should my blood sugar levels be?

For people with type 2 diabetes, healthy blood sugar levels before meals or when they have not eaten for a period of time are 90 to 130 mg/dL. Between 1 and 2 hours after the start of a meal, healthy blood sugar levels are less than 180 mg/dL. Talk with your doctor and diabetes care team about your target blood sugar levels.



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7. What is A1C?

A1C is a blood test done in a doctor's office or in a laboratory. It shows your average blood sugar level over the past 2 to 3 months. Most doctors recommend that you get an A1C test up to 4 times a year. It's important to know your A1C because it tells how balanced your blood sugar level is staying over time.

8. What should my target A1C be?

For most people with diabetes, the American Diabetes Association recommends an A1C of less than 7%. Another group of experts, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, recommends an even lower A1C of 6.5% or less.

You and your doctor will decide what your target A1C should be. Generally, the lower your A1C, the lower your risk of diabetes problems. In fact, every 1% you bring down your A1C may lower your risk of certain health problems caused by diabetes by as much as 40%!

9. Why do I have to change the way I eat?

Smart food choices, proper portions, and eating at about the same time every day are good ways to help control your blood sugar. By managing your blood sugar levels, you can help avoid potential complications of the disease. To learn which food is best for you, talk with your doctor. Also, a diabetes educator or registered dietitian can help you create a meal plan that offers variety and nutrition. Here are some healthy eating tips:

- Limit sweets
- Eat often
- Be careful about when and how many carbohydrates you eat
- Eat a lot of whole-grain foods, fruits, and vegetables
- Eat less fat
- Limit alcohol

10. How can exercise affect my diabetes?

Scientific research proves that increased physical activity has many benefits, including helping you:

- Lower your blood sugar
- Improve your body's ability to use insulin
- Lower your blood pressure
- Reduce "bad" cholesterol
- Increase "good" cholesterol
- Lower your risk of heart disease and stroke
- Keep your heart strong

For more information about diabetes, please visit JourneyForControl.com.

