

General Diabetes Information and AADE Self-Care Behaviors

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease where the body cannot produce or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone that converts sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, gestational diabetes. Approximately 90% of people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes.

Why is it important?

Type 2 diabetes requires regular and ongoing management and care. If poorly managed, it can put people at risk for eye disease, foot amputation, kidney failure, and heart and blood vessel disease.

Learn more about diabetes from the following resources:

[American Diabetes Association \(ADA\)](#) provides a comprehensive diabetes overview in the “Diabetes Basics” section of the website.

[Diabetes Forecast](#) is a periodical magazine for people with diabetes, offering the latest updates on diabetes treatment and day-to-day coping.

[Diabetes Self-Management](#) is an online magazine for people with diabetes aimed at promoting effective diabetes self-management.

[ADA Complete Guide to Diabetes, 5th Edition](#): information needed to live an active, healthy life with diabetes from the American Diabetes Association

The [National Diabetes Education Program](#) has information available on diabetes incidence and prevalence in the U.S., and diabetes management and prevention

The National Diabetes Education Program offers a handout called [4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life](#) that provides information on how to better manage diabetes and live an active life

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on basic diabetes information to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers a handout on general diabetes information called “What is type 2 diabetes?”

The [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#) offers a booklet in Spanish about diabetes general information and control for people with diabetes

AADE 7 Self-Care Behaviors

What is it?

The AADE 7 Self-Care Behaviors are a series of seven skills determined by the American Association of Diabetes Educators to be essential to effective diabetes self-management. The skills include: Healthy Eating, Being Active, Blood-Sugar Monitoring, Taking Medication, Problem Solving, Reducing Risks, and Healthy Coping.

Why is it important?

When a person with diabetes practices the 7 Self-Management Skills regularly, they reduce their own risk of diabetes complications and increase their overall quality of life.

What are they?

American Association of Diabetes Educators 7 Self-Care Behaviors:

- [Healthy Eating](#)
- [Being Active](#)
- [Blood-Sugar Monitoring](#)
- [Taking Medication](#)
- [Problem Solving](#)
- [Reducing Risks](#)
- [Healthy Coping](#)

Click on the links above to go to a specific section.

Healthy Eating

What is it?

Healthy eating refers to eating a variety of food for a balanced diet, and includes making healthy food choices, understanding the ideal portion sizes, and meal frequency.

Why is it important?

Healthy eating helps manage blood sugar and reduce other risks for diabetes-related complications, such as elevated blood lipids and high blood pressure.

Learn more about healthy eating and diabetes management from the following resources:

The University of Michigan Health System has information for people with diabetes on [how to use a food guide pyramid](#) and [how to use a plate format for eating](#)

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) contains a [Guide to Eating Out](#) for people with diabetes

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](#) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on healthy eating

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on healthy eating to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers nutrition handouts called, “Ordering fast food wisely” and “A journey of thousand miles”

[Nutrition Goal Setting Form](#) is a handout sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Diabetes Initiative that assists people with diabetes in setting nutritional goals

The [Healthy Eating section of the Diabetes Initiative](#) includes multiple patient education materials on nutrition

[My Food Advisor](#) is an interactive nutrition education website from the American Diabetes Association that assists with meal planning and offers healthy eating tips

The [International Diabetes Federation \(IDF\)](#) provides education modules on healthy eating

Being Active

What is it?

Being active (physical activity) looks different for each person, depending on age, interests, and physical ability. Physical activity includes gardening, walking, biking, swimming, bowling, dancing, cleaning the house, walking the dog – the list goes on and on.

Why is it important?

Being active helps condition the heart, lungs, and muscles, and even improves skin tone, weight-control, and energy. For people with diabetes, exercise may improve blood sugar levels by helping the body to better use insulin and food.

Learn more about being active and diabetes management from the following resources:

The [National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse](#) has a Q&A resource with information on physical activity and diabetes

The [BD Diabetes learning center](#) includes general information about exercise and diabetes

[“Don’t Let Diabetes Get in Your Way”](#) is an article from the American Diabetes Association about getting started in a physical activity routine

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](#) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on being active

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on being active to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers a handout called, “Exercise is Good for You”

The [International Diabetes Federation \(IDF\)](#) provides education modules on physical activity

[“All About Physical Activity for People with Diabetes”](#) is a toolkit from the American Diabetes Association and includes tips for starting and making an exercise plan

Johns Hopkins Medicine offers a Diabetes Special Report called [Diabetes and Exercise – Keeping Your Blood Glucose Levels in Check](#) with the information on the ways to prevent blood sugar level from dropping during exercise

Blood-Sugar Monitoring

What is it?

Blood sugar monitoring involves using a device to regularly check blood sugar levels, which can help keep track of blood sugar level fluctuations throughout the day and inform if action needs to be taken to maintain levels as close to normal (70- 120 mg/dl) as possible.

Why is it important?

Recording blood sugar levels gives insight into how medicines, physical activity, illness, stress, and other activities affect blood sugar daily. Blood sugar levels that are too high or too low can have serious complications.

Learn more about blood sugar monitoring from the following resources:

The [“All About Diabetes – Self Monitoring”](#) section from Medical News Today offers tips and instructions for blood sugar monitoring and even has a “how-to” video

Familydoctor.org has a section on [monitoring your blood sugar levels](#) that includes general information and an instructional video

The University of Michigan Health System has information for people with diabetes on how to do a [home blood-glucose test](#)

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](#) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on monitoring blood sugar

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on blood sugar monitoring to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers handouts on blood sugar monitoring

[“If You Have Diabetes...Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers”](#) is a handout from the National Diabetes Education Program for people with diabetes, explaining A1C testing and daily blood sugar monitoring

Taking Medication

What is it?

People with type 2 diabetes may need to take pills or insulin to lower blood glucose levels and manage their diabetes. Diabetes medication works best when used regularly and in combination with healthy eating and physical activity.

Why is it important?

It is important for people with diabetes to understand how to take medications properly, what to do in case of hypoglycemia, and how to overcome barriers to adherence.

Learn more about taking medication for diabetes from the following resources:

The American Diabetes Association contains general information on [oral medications for diabetes](#)

[Diabetes Self-Management](#), a magazine for people with diabetes, contains an article on oral medicines for type 2 diabetes

[Diabetes Drug Information](#) can be found on My Diabetes Central, a website for people with diabetes

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](#) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on taking medication

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on taking medication to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) provides education modules on [taking insulin](#) and [other medications](#) for diabetes

[Taking Insulin](#) and [Using an Insulin Pump](#) are articles and how-to videos from Medical News Today

Problem Solving

What is it?

People with diabetes need to be able to navigate both emergencies and challenges with the small details of daily diabetes management. Solving problems, no matter how large or small they are, involves clear-headed thinking and determination.

Why is it important?

Obstacles in diabetes self-management are encountered every day, so it is very important to know how to find solutions for unexpected problems. Daily problems or stressors can put the body under stress and result in dramatic fluctuations in blood sugar levels.

Learn more about problem solving in diabetes management from the following resources:

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](https://www.mydiabetespartner.org) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on problem solving

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on problem solving to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers a handout called, “Balancing Better,” about solving problems in order to keep blood sugar levels normal

Reducing Risks

What is it?

People with diabetes are at higher risk to develop some complications, such as circulatory problems and infections. Many activities can help reduce that risk, such as quitting smoking, controlling blood pressure and foot care.

Why is it important?

Poorly managed diabetes can lead to short term problems and long term complications. Reducing risks can help improve quality and quantity of life for people with diabetes.

Learn more about reducing risks from the following resources:

The American Heart Association provides information on [diabetes and high blood pressure](#) and [diabetes and cholesterol](#)

The University of Michigan Health System has information for people with diabetes on [foot care](#)

[“Prevent Diabetes Problems: Keep your heart and blood vessels healthy”](#) is a Q&A resource from the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse on circulatory health

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) website contains information on [healthy weight loss as a way for reducing risks of diabetes complications](#)

[MyDiabetesPartner.org](#) is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on reducing risks

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on reducing risks to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers handouts on reducing risks by quitting smoking and proper foot care

[“Take Care of Your Feet for a Lifetime”](#) is a brochure about foot care for people with diabetes from the National Diabetes Education Program

Healthy Coping

What is it?

People with diabetes who positively cope with daily stress are likely to feel in control, informed, and supported by others.

Why is it important?

Living with diabetes can be emotionally challenging, so dealing positively with emotions can help overcome daily diabetes management challenges. Healthy and positive coping with the emotions associated with diabetes can contribute to better control over one's diabetes.

Learn more about healthy coping in diabetes from the following resources:

MyDiabetesPartner.org is an online resource for family, friends, and diabetes educators of people with diabetes that includes videos on healthy coping

[Coping and Diabetes](#) is an online article by Margaret Grey from Diabetes Spectrum (journal)

Find handouts, tools, and educational modules on healthy coping to help train peer supporters and offer peer support:

The [Michigan Diabetes Research and Training Center \(MDRTC\)](#) offers a handout called, "Coping with Stress"

The Behavioral Diabetes Institute produces a handout for people with diabetes called, "[The Emotional Side of Diabetes](#)," that includes 10 suggestions for coping with negative emotions associated with diabetes

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Diabetes Initiative supported the production of "[Strengthen Your Spirit](#)," a self-assessment tool for healthy coping