

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a group of diseases that result in too much sugar in the blood (high blood glucose). National Diabetes Month is observed every November so individuals, healthcare professionals, organizations, and communities across the country can bring attention to diabetes and its impact on millions of Americans.

Preventing complications

Research has shown that managing diabetes as early as possible can help prevent diabetes-related health problems such as kidney disease, vision loss, heart disease, and stroke. Here is some information on how you can take measures to help prevent diabetes-related health problems:

- **Taking care of your diabetes means taking care of your heart.** Diabetes can damage blood vessels and lead to heart disease and stroke. You can do a lot to prevent heart disease and stroke by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; and by not smoking.
- **Diabetic eye disease.** Diabetes can damage your eyes and lead to low vision and blindness. The best way to prevent eye disease is to manage your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol; and to not smoke. Also, have a dilated eye exam at least once a year.
- **Take care of your feet.** Diabetes can cause nerve damage and poor blood flow, which can lead to serious foot problems. Common foot problems, such as a callus, can lead to pain or an infection that makes it hard to walk. Get a foot checkup at each visit with your healthcare team.
- **Diabetes and kidney disease.** Diabetic kidney disease, also called *diabetic nephropathy*, is kidney disease caused by diabetes. You can help protect your kidneys by managing your diabetes and meeting your blood pressure goals.

Mobile apps

- [Fooducate](#)
- [Glucosio](#)
- [Health2Sync](#)
- [mySugr](#)

Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Kiko Torres, MD**, NMHC's Senior Medical Director.

It is important to get routine care to stay healthy. Two times a year, it is recommended that you have an A1C test. You may need to get it checked more often if the result is over 7. Below are other recommended routine checkups to keep you healthy and find and treat any problems early.

See your healthcare provider at least twice a year. At each visit be sure you have a blood pressure check, foot check, weight check, and a review of your self-care plan.

Once each year, be sure you have a:

- Cholesterol test
- Complete foot exam
- Dental exam to check teeth and gums
- Dilated eye exam to check for eye problems
- Flu shot
- Urine and blood test to check for kidney problems

Additional resources

- [American Diabetes Association](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)