

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 that individuals, health care 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's 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 help prevent these by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, 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, cholesterol levels, and to not smoke. Also, get 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, like calluses, can lead to pain or an infection that makes it hard to walk. Get a foot checkup at each visit with your healthcare provider.
- **Diabetes and kidney disease.** Diabetic-caused kidney disease is also called diabetic nephropathy. 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 **Jan Kovak, MD**, our Medical Director.

When living with diabetes, it is important to get routine care to stay healthy. Two times a year, it is recommended you get an A1C test (it may be checked more often if your blood glucose level is over 7). Below are other recommended routine check-ups to keep you healthy and find and treat any problems early:

See your health care provider at least twice a year. At each visit, be sure you get these checks done:

- Blood pressure check
- Foot check
- Weight check
- Review of your self-care plan

Once a year, be sure you have these tests done:

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

Additional resources

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