

Spring 2023

# Diabetes

Information to help you improve your health from  
**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama**

When your body has a hard time controlling blood sugar levels, it creates the condition known as diabetes. This can be because your body does not produce enough of (or has become resistant to) a hormone called insulin, which controls your blood sugar levels.



BlueCross BlueShield  
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# Difference Between Type 1 and 2 Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic condition that causes you to have higher-than-normal blood sugar levels and occurs when your body can no longer make or effectively use insulin. Type 1 diabetes is a genetic condition that often shows up early in life, and type 2 is primarily lifestyle-related and develops over time.

<b>TYPE 1</b>	<p><b>WHAT IS TYPE 1</b></p> <p>Type 1 diabetes can occur at any age. It is often diagnosed in children, adolescents or young adults. In most people with type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system, which usually fights infection, attacks and destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. As a result, your pancreas stops making insulin. Without insulin, glucose cannot get into your cells, and your blood glucose rises above normal, which can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss and kidney disease.</p> <p><b>RISKS FACTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family history of having type 1 diabetes</li><li>• Age</li></ul> <p><b>TREATMENT</b></p> <p>Type 1 diabetes is treated by taking insulin injections or using an insulin pump or other device.</p>
<b>TYPE 2</b>	<p><b>WHAT IS TYPE 2</b></p> <p>Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes. It often develops in people over age 45, but more and more children, teens, and young adults are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 means that your body does not use insulin properly. While some people can control their blood sugar levels with healthy eating and exercise, others may need medication or insulin to manage it.</p> <p><b>RISKS FACTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prediabetes</li><li>• Heart and blood vessel disease</li><li>• Family history of diabetes</li><li>• Being overweight or obese</li><li>• Not physically active</li></ul> <p>You can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with lifestyle changes like losing weight, eating a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity.</p> <p><b>TREATMENT</b></p> <p>Lifestyle choices, including eating a healthy diet, exercising, staying at a healthy weight and your body's ability to produce and respond to insulin, are key to managing type 2 diabetes.</p>





## Spring into Action

As the seasons change, it is important to continue managing your diabetes effectively. With warmer weather and longer days right around the corner, there are a few extra things you can do to improve your overall health.

### Get Active Outdoors

- Walking (about 3½ miles per hour)
- Bicycling (less than ten mph)
- Tennis (Doubles)
- General yard work

### Add Fresh Fruits and Vegetables to Your Diet

- Seasonal fruits and vegetables are a great way to eat healthy this time of year.
- Incorporate fresh blueberries, strawberries, corn or tomatoes in your meals.

### Stay Hydrated

- Dehydration can impact your blood sugar levels.
- Keep a few extra water bottles around to make sure you're drinking enough water.

### Wear Protective Footwear

- Comfortable shoes are important for any outdoor activity to reduce your risk of injury.
- Invest in quality shoes for warmer months to help protect your feet.
- Be careful when walking barefoot, and routinely inspect your feet for minor injuries before they become major problems.

### Healthy Diet and Physical Activities

- Weight loss will further lower risk, but even a 7 percent weight loss can reduce risk by up to 60 percent.
- Cardiovascular exercises aid blood sugar control, insulin sensitivity and weight loss.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables that provide healthy carbs, sugars, fiber and unsaturated fats.

**Enjoy the warmer weather this time of year and make positive changes to improve your health. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how seasonal changes could impact how you manage your diabetes.**

# 5 Common Diabetes Myths

Find out some interesting facts and common myths about diabetes.

MYTH	FACT
✗ Diabetes is not a serious condition.	✓ Diabetes is a severe condition. There is currently no cure, and unexpected complications can occur if it is not adequately managed. These complications include heart disease, nerve damage, kidney damage, vision loss, skin conditions and hearing impairment.
✗ Prediabetes always leads to diabetes.	✓ If left unchecked, prediabetes can develop into type 2 diabetes. Regular physical activity and a healthy diet can help you reduce your chances of prediabetes developing into type 2 diabetes.
✗ No one in my family has diabetes, so I won't get the disease.	✓ A family history of diabetes can increase your risk of developing the disease. However, most people with diabetes have no family members with the condition.
✗ I can stop taking diabetes medicines once my blood sugar is under control.	✓ Some people with type 2 diabetes can control their blood sugar without medicine by losing weight, eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. But diabetes is a progressive disease, and you may need medicine to keep your blood sugar within your target range over time.
✗ It is not safe to exercise with diabetes.	✓ Getting regular exercise is an essential part of managing diabetes because it can help boost your body's sensitivity to insulin. Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

# Managing Your Blood Sugar

It is essential to keep your blood sugar levels in the target range to help prevent or delay long-term and severe health complications. Managing your blood sugar effectively can also help improve your energy and mood.



## What causes low blood sugar

Low blood sugar can be caused by various factors, including skipping meals, taking too much insulin, exercising more than expected or consuming alcohol.

## What causes high blood sugar

High blood sugar can be caused by being sick, stressed, eating more than planned or not giving yourself enough insulin.

## When and how do you check your blood sugar

Use a blood sugar meter or glucose monitor to check your blood sugar. A blood sugar meter measures the amount of sugar through a blood sample from your fingertip.

A glucose monitor is a sensor under your skin that measures your blood sugar every few minutes. How often you check your blood sugar depends on the type of diabetes you have, but you typically check your blood sugar when you first wake up, before you eat or drink anything, two hours after a meal and at bedtime.

## What is the blood sugar target range

A blood sugar target is the range you should reach as much as possible. Before a meal, the range is 80 to 130 mg/dL. Two hours after a meal, it should be less than 180 mg/dL. Your target range may differ depending on your age, other health conditions and factors.

## Ways to treat low blood sugar

- Take your glucose tablets
- Drink fruit juice or regular soda
- Eat hard candy
- Adjust your treatment plan as needed

## Ways to treat high blood sugar

- Be more active
- Take your medicine as instructed
- Follow your diabetes meal plan
- Check your blood sugar as directed

**It can be challenging to manage your blood sugar. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions about managing your blood sugar and ways to improve your health.**



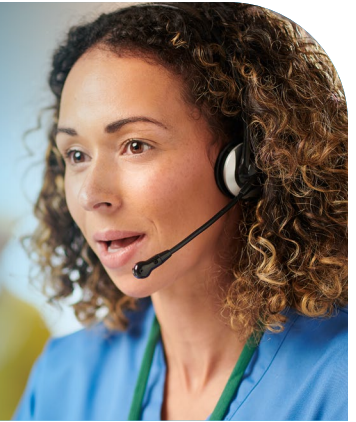
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Call **1-888-841-5741** for more information.

[AlabamaBlue.com/TalkToANurse](https://AlabamaBlue.com/TalkToANurse)



## COVID-19 Update

The current vaccines provide a high level of protection against severe disease.

**Getting vaccinated will help keep you and your family healthy and safe.**

### STAY SAFE.

This information is provided for general informational purposes. Information contained in this communication is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding your healthcare needs. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking medical advice because of something you have read in this informational piece. Always check your benefits for coverage information and limitations.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in your area, contact your physician's office or local pharmacy. Additional COVID-19 topics and how the pandemic could affect you and your family can be found at [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)



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