



Pharmacy Advisor Program

Helping You Manage Your Diabetes



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Diabetes and Your CVS Caremark Pharmacy Advisor Pharmacist

Managing your diabetes can be a challenge, but you don't have to do it alone. Your CVS Caremark Pharmacy Advisor Team is here to help. Your Team, including your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist, provides specialized support so you can focus more on living your life, not your diabetes. If you receive a call or letter that indicates that we need to speak to you please call us at **1-866-624-1481**. For general questions about your prescription benefits you should call the number on your prescription ID card or you can visit **Caremark.com**.

Keep reading to learn more about managing your diabetes and overall health. Keep it handy so you can look at it whenever you need to. Then take action to stay on track and stay healthier.

Know Your Diabetes

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which blood glucose (sugar) levels are too high. Glucose comes from the food you eat. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose get into your cells to give you energy. Insulin helps lower glucose levels in the blood. Type 1 diabetes is when the body does not make insulin. Type 2 diabetes, the more common type, is when the body does not make enough insulin or does not use insulin properly. Without enough insulin, the glucose stays in your blood.

What problems can be caused from diabetes?

Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause serious problems. It can damage your eyes, kidneys, and nerves (such as in the legs and feet). Having diabetes also increases the risk of heart and blood vessel disease that can lead to a heart attack and stroke.



Did you know?

Diabetes is associated with an increased risk of certain cancers. Talk to your doctor about getting cancer screenings and managing your risk factors for cancer (including obesity, physical inactivity, and smoking).

What are the risk factors for diabetes?

Some risk factors for diabetes include having a parent, brother or sister with diabetes, older age, high blood pressure, low levels of HDL (good cholesterol), high levels of triglycerides (fat), having certain health conditions, not getting enough physical activity, and having too much body weight (being overweight or obese).

Read on to better understand how to manage your diabetes. Taking the time to know more about your health can make a big difference in how you feel today and the choices you make in the future.

Medications to Lower Your Risk of Diabetes-Related Problems

Medications for diabetes help lower blood glucose. Managing your blood glucose can decrease the risk of serious health problems, like a heart attack or stroke. Some people with diabetes may also have to take blood pressure, cholesterol, or other medications to lower their risk of health problems. Always take your medications as prescribed to help manage your diabetes (along with other risk factors) and lower your risk of certain health problems caused by diabetes, such as:

- Heart disease and stroke
- Eye problems
- Nerve damage
- Kidney problems
- Gum disease and loss of teeth

If you have any side effects from your medication, are not sure how to take it, or have other questions, talk to your diabetes health care providers. Your doctor may adjust your medication. Your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist can give you tips on the best time of day to take your medications and help you stay on track.



Getting the Most from Your Medication

It can be hard to remember when and how to take your diabetes medication. But medications can best manage your blood glucose when they're taken exactly as prescribed. Never change or stop medications without talking to the doctor who prescribed them. Follow these tips to help stay on track.



Patient Profile

Lisa is a busy mom of three, who was already being treated with blood pressure and cholesterol medications when her doctor prescribed one for diabetes. Ordering refills for these three different medications was becoming a real challenge. Her **CVS Caremark Pharmacy Advisor** pharmacist recommended starting automatic refills*. Now Lisa's medication is automatically refilled and she gets a reminder call when it's about to be refilled.

Take medications as part of your routine

- It's best to take medications at the same time(s). For example, after eating breakfast or brushing your teeth.

Use reminders

- Set a standing alarm on your cell phone. For example, you can download the **CVS Caremark mobile app** from Google Play™ or Apple® iTunes® and set reminders.
- Post a sticky note where it can be seen easily. For example, on the bathroom mirror or refrigerator.
- Schedule tasks or appointments on your computer.
- Use a pill box or make a check-off chart.

Make and keep doctor and blood work appointments

- Doctors may order blood work or other tests to check your response to diabetes treatment. Write down and keep all doctor and blood work appointments because missing them could affect your treatment goals.

Join a support group

- Join an in-person or online support group like MyHealthTeams. Talking to others living with diabetes may help you cope with treatment and everyday challenges.

Work with your entire health care team

- Work closely with doctors, Pharmacy Advisor pharmacists and other providers. They can give advice on managing side effects, what to do if you miss a dose, creating an easy-to-follow medication schedule and more.



Patient Profile

Bob loves his job as an operations manager at a large shipping company. His desk, however, is right next to the employee lounge, where Bob found himself snacking too much. Over time, he put on an extra 25 pounds. Luckily, his company also has a great perk — an outdoor fitness trail. He started to include brisk walks during lunch to help meet his weekly fitness goal. Exercising regularly not only helped lower his blood glucose levels, but took off those unhealthy extra pounds.





Feeling Your Best

Fill your prescriptions through CVS Caremark Mail Service Pharmacy

Getting all your medications from one pharmacy allows the pharmacist to have a more complete picture of your medication history. This helps the pharmacist to easily check for drug interactions and manage any side effects you may have.

Keep up with your refills

Refilling your prescriptions on time is part of staying healthy. Start automatic refills* through CVS Caremark Mail Service Pharmacy and your medications are mailed directly to your home or anywhere you like. When a prescription expires or is out of refills, CVS Caremark will contact your doctor to request a new one.

Follow a healthy lifestyle

In addition to taking your medication, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends the following daily care activities:

- Learn all you can about diabetes to help reduce potential health risks and understand what to do if you have a problem
- Check your blood glucose routinely
- Eat healthier
- Stay active

Managing Your Blood Glucose

Monitor your blood glucose at home

Checking your blood glucose levels regularly gives you an idea of when your levels are on target and how well your diabetes is controlled.



Many home blood glucose meters track your blood glucose levels for you. You can also keep a journal to record your levels, the time you take your medication and other details about taking care of your diabetes. Be sure to share this information with your doctor.

Keep in mind that your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist can help you get testing supplies that are covered by your prescription benefit plan.

Know the highs and lows of diabetes

Managing diabetes includes knowing the symptoms of low and high blood glucose. With proper planning, you can take steps to get your blood glucose back on track.

For some people, hypoglycemia (abnormally low blood glucose) is when blood glucose is less than 70 mg/dL. This number may be different for you. Some symptoms of hypoglycemia are shakiness, dizziness, headache, hunger, and sweating. Hypoglycemia can be caused by the side effects of certain diabetes medications, skipping or delaying meals, not eating enough, increased physical activity, or drinking alcohol (especially on an empty stomach). Hypoglycemia should generally be treated by taking glucose as recommended by your doctor, followed by re-checking your blood glucose (usually in 15 minutes). Work with your doctor to adjust your medication, meals and

Some symptoms of hypoglycemia are shakiness, dizziness, headache, hunger, and sweating.

snacks, or the time of day you exercise to reduce your risk of hypoglycemia.

Some signs and symptoms of hyperglycemia (high blood glucose) are high levels of sugar in the blood or urine, having to urinate frequently, or feeling thirstier than usual.

Let your doctor know about these symptoms right away.



Know Your ABCs

Talk to your health care team about how to manage your **A1C**, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol. This will help lower your chances of having a heart attack, stroke, or other problems related to diabetes.

A is for **HbA1c (A1C)**.

A1C is an average blood glucose level over the past two or three months. The results give an idea of how well your diabetes treatment plan is working. For some adults with diabetes, the A1C goal is less than 7 percent. Ask your doctor what your goal should be.

B is for blood

pressure. High blood pressure makes your heart work harder. It can increase your risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease. Taking medications for high blood pressure as prescribed by your doctor can help lower this risk. The blood pressure goal for some people with diabetes is less than 140 mm Hg (top number) and less than 90 mm Hg (bottom number). Ask your doctor what your goal should be.

C is for cholesterol.

LDL or “bad” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. High LDL levels can increase risk of a heart attack or stroke. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove cholesterol from your blood vessels. High triglycerides (another kind of fat in the blood) also increases the risk of heart attack or stroke. Ask your doctor what your cholesterol goal should be.



Healthy Eating with Diabetes

People with diabetes have to take extra care to make sure what and when they eat is balanced with their diabetes medications and how much they exercise. This will help keep blood glucose levels from getting too low or too high. Discuss any diet or exercise changes with your doctor to make sure the changes are right for you.

- Get nutrition from a variety of foods, including whole grains, vegetables, fruits, non-fat dairy products, beans, lean meats, poultry and/or fish.
- Try not to eat too much food or too much of one type of food.
- Space your meals throughout the day; do not skip meals.
- Limit beverages and foods with added sugar.

- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. Avoid drinking alcohol on an empty stomach or when your blood glucose is low. Alcohol may affect your blood glucose and increase the risk of side effects with some medications.
- Limit sodium (salt) to less than 2,300 mg per day (for adults). Some doctors may even suggest less sodium. Ask your doctor or dietitian what your sodium limits are based on your health needs. And remember that a lot of the sodium we eat comes from packaged, prepared and restaurant foods.
- Check food and beverage labels to see how much sugar and sodium are in the product. Ask your doctor or dietitian about what you should look for in a food label.
- Work with your doctor or dietitian to come up with a meal plan that includes how much and what kinds of food you should choose.

More Tips for Healthier Living

- ☐ **Maintain a healthy weight.** Ask your doctor what a healthy weight is for you. Eating healthy and getting regular exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and manage your diabetes.
- ☐ **Get regular physical activity.** Most adults with diabetes should get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. For example, try to walk 30 minutes per day for 5 days per week. Your doctor can suggest a physical activity plan that works for you. Some people

may need to check their blood glucose before and after physical activity. Be sure to wear proper fitting shoes to reduce the risk of foot problems.

- ☐ **Get your recommended vaccines (shots).** People with diabetes are more likely to have serious problems if they become ill with the flu or pneumonia. You can reduce your risk of these infections by getting your flu shot (once every year) and pneumonia shot. Some adults with diabetes may also need a hepatitis B vaccine. Talk to your doctor about getting the shots you need.
- ☐ **Don't smoke.** Smoking increases the risk for heart disease, heart attack, stroke, certain types of cancer, and many other health problems. If you smoke, and are ready to quit, ask your doctor for help or visit **www.smokefree.gov**.
- ☐ **Practice good skin and foot care.** People with diabetes can get certain skin conditions more easily. Avoid scratching dry or itchy skin as this can open the skin up to germs. Dry your feet well, especially between your toes. Avoid putting lotion between toes as this may cause fungus to grow. Check your feet routinely for cuts, blisters, sores, swelling or redness.
- ☐ **Take care of your teeth and gums.** Regular dental checkups every six months (or as recommended by your dentist) and controlling your blood glucose help keep your mouth healthier.
- ☐ **Visit your health care team regularly.** Keep regularly scheduled appointments with your primary doctor, eye doctor, dentist, dietitian and other diabetes providers.

Resources

The following websites can help you better understand and manage your condition. They provide information on diabetes and related conditions, exercise and nutrition tips, and even recipes to help you plan your meals.

- American Diabetes Association | www.diabetes.org
- American Heart Association | www.heart.org
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases | www.niddk.nih.gov
- National Kidney Foundation | www.kidney.org
- CVS Caremark | www.caremark.com
 - Schedule or request a refill
 - Start automatic refills*
 - View your prescription records

If you do not want to receive any more communications about this program from CVS Caremark, please call **1-866-624-1481**.

This information is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about this information and any health-related questions you have. CVS Caremark assumes no liability whatsoever for the information provided or for any diagnosis or treatment made as a result of this information.

*Your refill will be mailed to you automatically before your refill due date, without any service, shipping or handling charges. Any copay or coinsurance will be charged at that time, unless you cancel the order. We will alert you before your prescription is refilled or renewed. To cancel, you must notify us by calling the toll-free Customer Care number on your prescription ID card or notify us. You will have at least 10 days to cancel the order. If we do not provide you with at least 10 days to cancel, we will accept a return of the order and issue a full refund, including postage. To cancel your enrollment in automatic refill at any time, call us or notify us at www.caremark.com. Automatic refill is available for most common maintenance medications for chronic conditions or long-term therapy. Not all mail service prescriptions are eligible. Medications such as controlled substances, specialty drugs and prescriptions covered by certain government payers, including Medicare Part B, are not part of this program.

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Take Control of Your Health

- ✓ Create a medication schedule
- ✓ Take your medication as part of your routine
- ✓ Use reminders
- ✓ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist, including your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist
- ✓ Start automatic refills*
- ✓ Choose what, how much and when to eat
- ✓ Get active and check with your doctor about what activities might be good for you
- ✓ Keep your medical appointments
- ✓ Learn all you can about diabetes

Control the Cost of Your Medication

CVS Caremark understands that the cost of medication can add up. We can help you with these costs so that the expense of your medication and testing supplies do not prevent you from taking care of your diabetes. Some ways you might be able to save money include ordering a 90-day supply of your medication or choosing generics when possible. Generics work the same as the brand-name medications, but often cost less.

For more information on ways to save, visit **Caremark.com**. You can also call the toll-free number on your member ID card.

