



# Living with Diabetes

An Everyday Guide for You and Your Family

# Getting Started

This guide will give you tips for how you can control your diabetes and feel better.

These small changes can make a big difference in the way you feel.

This guide was developed by patients, doctors, diabetes educators and nurses, many of whom are in these pictures.








Get started now. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll begin to feel better!

For additional trusted information:

[www.acponline.org/patients/diabetes](http://www.acponline.org/patients/diabetes)

**Just START!**

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# You Are Not Alone

When you have diabetes, taking care of yourself is important. Your doctor and health care team are here to help you. However, most of your day-to-day diabetes care is up to you and your family.

People with diabetes say they sometimes feel overwhelmed.

Some people feel alone.

## You are not alone.

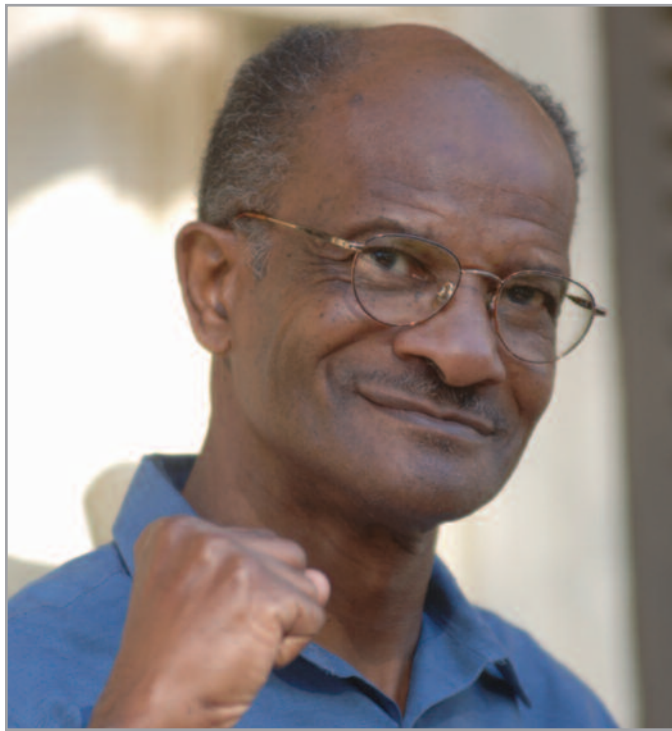
Millions of people have diabetes.

Share this guide with family and friends and get their support.



*“We’ve taken charge of our health and it feels good!”*

# What is Diabetes?



- When you have diabetes, your body has a hard time changing the food you eat into the energy you need.
- Diabetes causes sugar to build up in the blood. If the sugar stays high, it can slowly damage the heart, kidneys, eyes, and feet.
- Diabetes is a life-long disease, but you can control it by eating right and moving your body more. Most people with diabetes also have to take pills, insulin shots or other medicines.

Use this guide to learn the skills you need to take charge of your diabetes. You can take this one step at a time.



*“This book helped me get started.”*

# Eat Right

Eating right is the most important way to control your blood sugar. Your blood sugar is affected by what you eat, when you eat, and how much you eat.

The good news is that you don't have to go hungry, buy special foods, or give up all your favorite foods.

## Two things that are important for you to do:

1. Eat fewer carbohydrates.
2. Eat smaller portions.

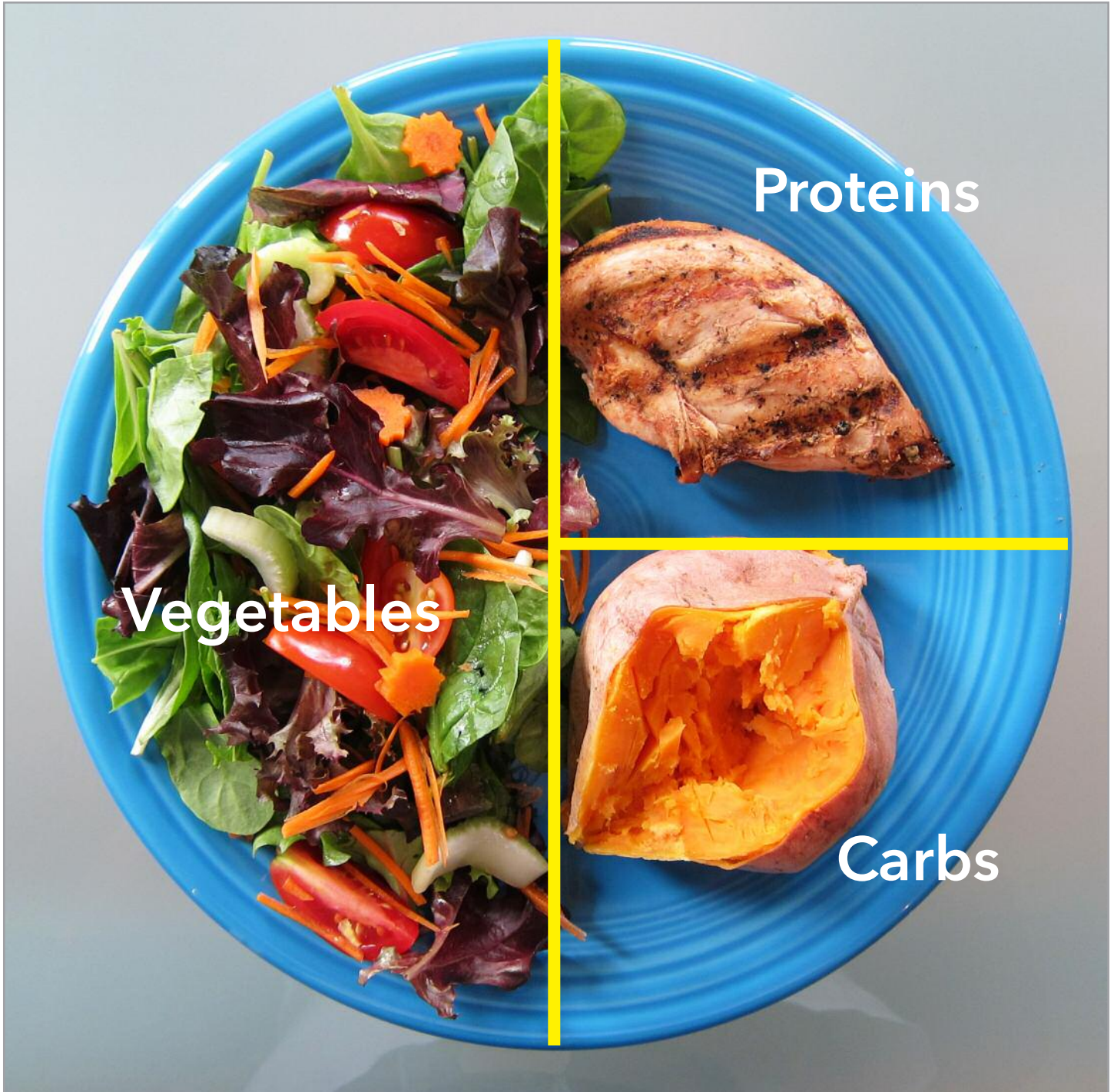
## What's in it for you?

- Eating the right portion sizes may help you lose weight.
- Most people with diabetes will feel better if they lose even a few pounds.
- Losing weight will also help lower your blood sugar.



# The Healthy Plate

Think of your plate as different sections. One half is for vegetables, and the other half is for proteins and carbohydrates (carbs).



# Carbohydrates (Carbs)

Carbohydrates (which include sweets, starches, fruits and milk) make your blood sugar go up more than most other foods. Pasta, potatoes, rice, beans, tortillas, and desserts are high in carbs. Here are examples of carbs that are the right size, and carbs that are too much.

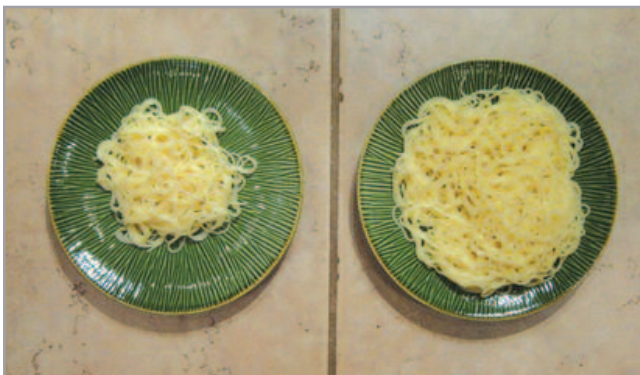
**RIGHT SIZE**

**TOO MUCH**



**RIGHT SIZE**

**TOO MUCH**





# Carbohydrates (Carbs)

You can still eat carbs ....just make the portion sizes smaller.

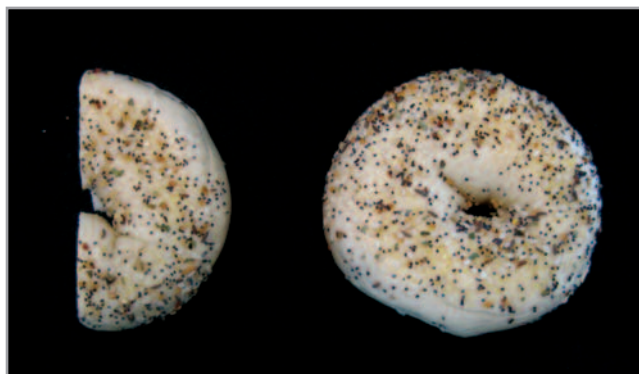
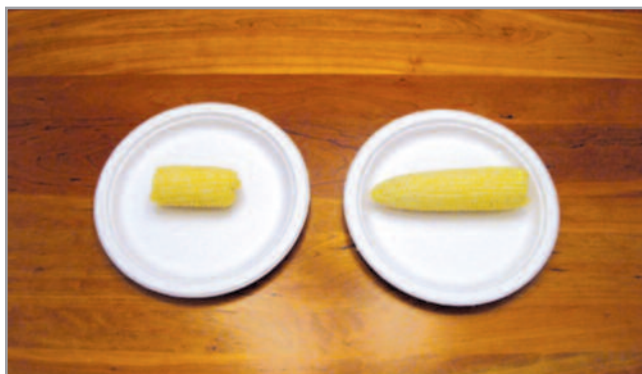
RIGHT SIZE

TOO MUCH



RIGHT SIZE

TOO MUCH



# Carbohydrates (Carbs)

## Desserts Have Lots Of Carbs

Desserts make your blood sugar go up fast. If you eat dessert, make sure to eat it right after your meal to keep your blood sugar from going up too fast.

Fruits raise your blood sugar just like all other carbs, but they are also good for you.

## These desserts are in the right portion sizes:

- A sugar-free popsicle
- A snack size (mini) candy bar
- A small piece of cake
- A half of a banana



*“When my sugar level is okay, I can eat a small scoop of ice cream.”*



*“I like to eat something sweet after dinner. Now I eat a piece of fruit instead of cookies or cake.”*

# Carbohydrates (Carbs)

## Drinks Have Carbs

Many drinks are high in carbs. Juices, fruit drinks, sodas, and even milk make your blood sugar go up.

## What are the best drinks for you?

- Water
- Low fat or skim milk (no more than two glasses a day)
- Diet sodas or sugar-free drinks
- Tea or coffee (with sugar substitutes if you want)

## Alcohol

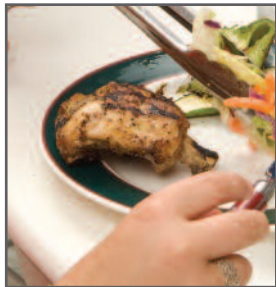
Alcohol can make it hard for you to control your blood sugar. If you drink alcohol, don't have more than 1 drink a day. Talk to your doctor about how to drink alcohol safely.



# Proteins

Proteins are good for your body. They don't raise your blood sugar very much and they keep you from getting hungry.

Proteins include meat, fish, chicken and tofu. Beans are a protein, but have a lot of carbs too. Eating well means eating the right portions of proteins.



Chicken



Steak



Fish



Turkey



Beans



Eggs



Tofu



Lentils



*“Once a week, I have beans for dinner instead of meat.”*

# Vegetables

Most vegetables are low in carbs, so you can eat as much of them as you want. Vegetables also fill you up. Try them fresh or frozen.



**Broccoli**



**Cabbage**



**Spinach**



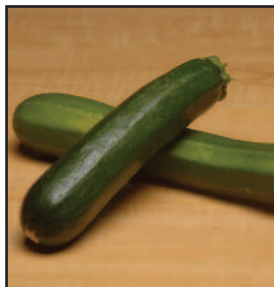
**Green Salad**



**Carrots**



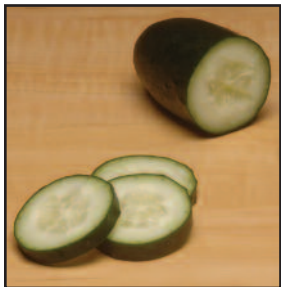
**Green beans**



**Zucchini**



**Peppers**



**Cucumbers**



**Jicama**



**Mushrooms**



**Tomatoes**

# Watch Your Portion Sizes

One of the easiest ways to control your blood sugar is to eat a little less of the foods you normally eat.

Many people do not realize that the portion sizes they eat are too big.

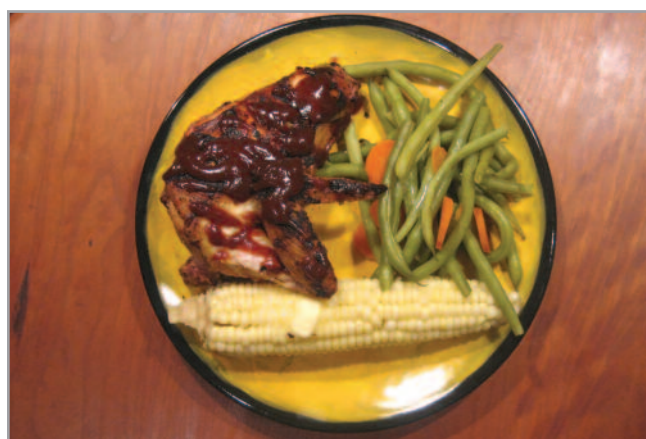


Look at these pictures. The portions on the left are good. The portions on the right are too much.

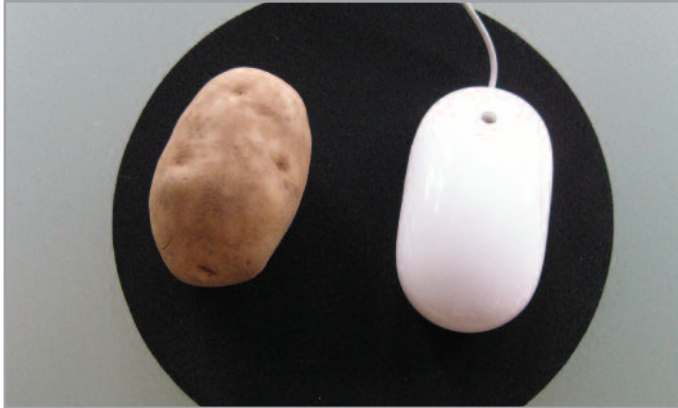
**RIGHT SIZE**



**TOO MUCH**



# Helpful Tips About Portion Sizes



*Eat a small potato the size of a computer mouse.*



*Eat a piece of meat that is the size of a deck of cards.*



*Fill a teacup with cooked rice to get the right portion size.*

# Try A Smaller Plate

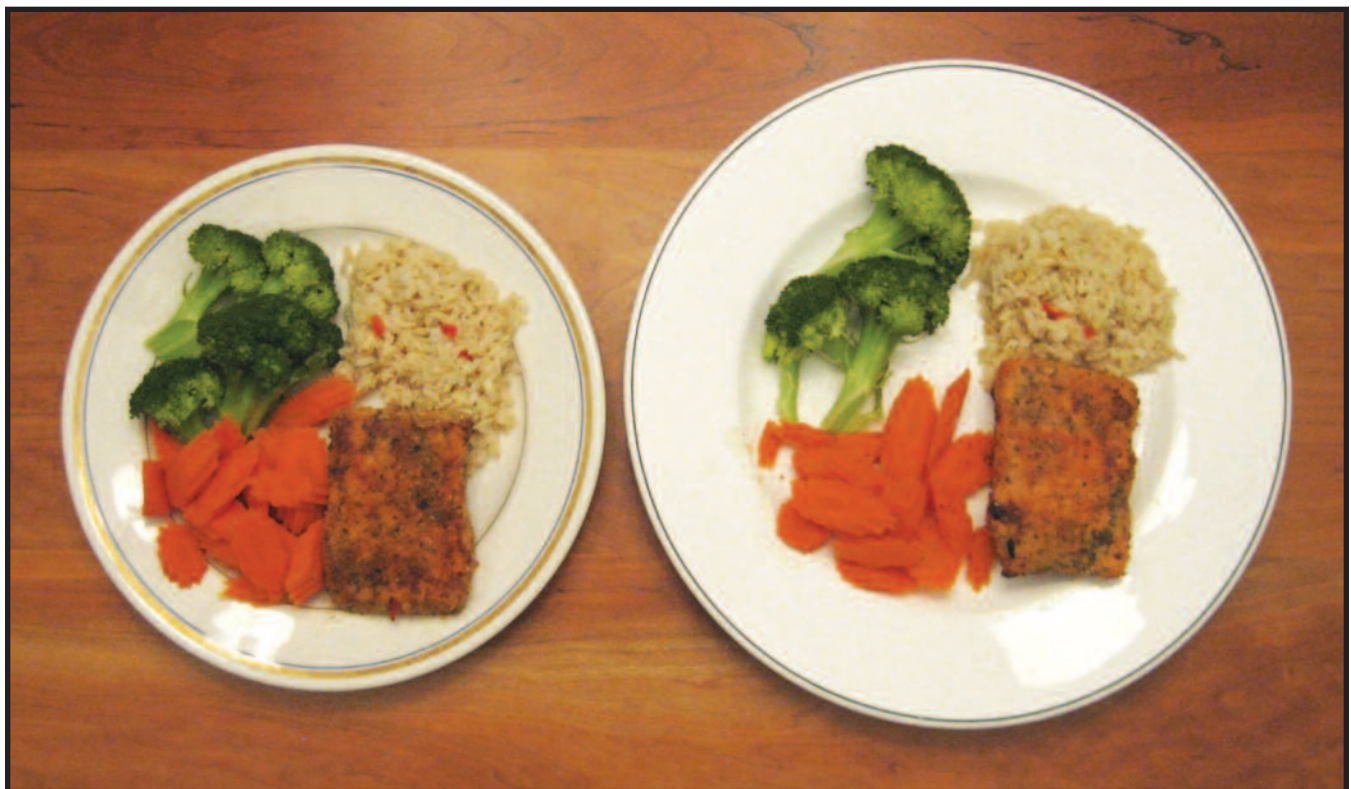
We eat a lot more food than people used to eat. Even our plates are bigger.

**Both of these plates show the right portion size.** The plate on the left is a regular size plate (9 inches across). You probably ate from this size plate when you were young.

You may eat from a plate like the one on the right today. This is an extra large plate (10-12 inches across).

One of the best ways to eat less without feeling hungry is to eat from a smaller plate.

## Same Amount Of Food On Different-Sized Plates



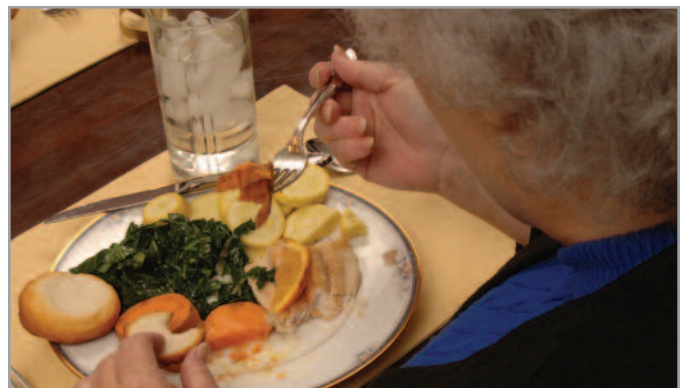
9-inch plate

12-inch plate



# Still Hungry?

- Eat more vegetables. Vegetables won't increase your blood sugar.
- Eat slowly. It takes a while for your body to feel full. Wait a few minutes before getting a second helping. You may find you no longer want it.
- Drink more water—a glass before you eat, and a sip between each bite.
- Take a short walk.



# Wake Up To A Good Breakfast

- Eating breakfast will help fill you up and give you energy.
- Breakfast will also keep your blood sugar from getting too low in the morning and too high later in the day.
- Eating protein in the morning will keep you from getting so hungry later on. Try eggs or egg substitute, yogurt, or low-fat cottage cheese.
- Only have bacon or sausage once in a while. When you do, try turkey bacon or sausage.



*“When I’m busy, I eat a piece of toast with some peanut butter.”*



# Let's Do Lunch



*“If I make my lunch at home, it is much easier to stick to the right portion size.”*



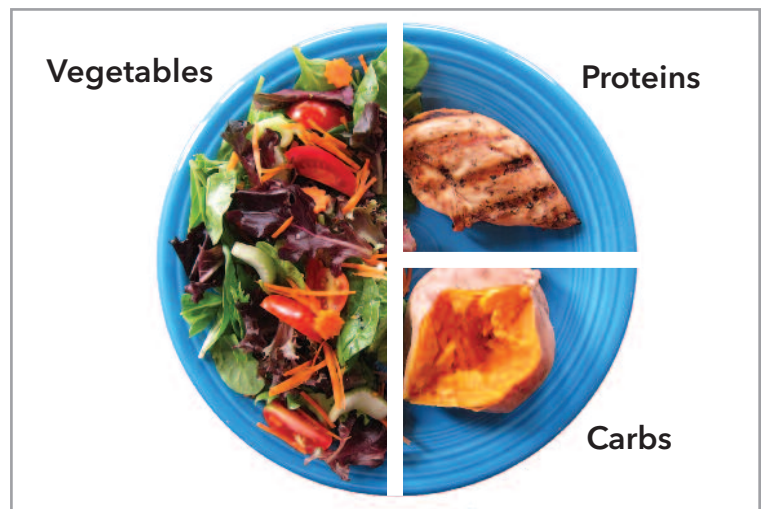
*“I stopped buying the combo meal. I order the small size now with a diet drink.”*



*“When I eat out, I box up half my meal. It's like I get two meals for the price of one.”*

# Dinner is Served

No matter where you eat dinner, remember: vegetables should take up half of your plate.



*“If I’m still hungry, I eat more vegetables.”*



*“If I go to a buffet, I only fill my plate once. If I want more, I go for salad with a little dressing.”*



# Snack Attack!

Keep these foods handy in case you feel hungry between meals:



Veggie sticks



Graham crackers



Snack size bag of popcorn



1 Hard boiled egg

Stay away from foods that are high in carbs, like chips, crackers, candy bars, or pretzels.



*“I keep a little bag of nuts at work. I snack on them in the afternoon.”*



*“If I want something sweet, I eat a sugar-free popsicle or chew sugar-free gum.”*



# Shake Off The Salt

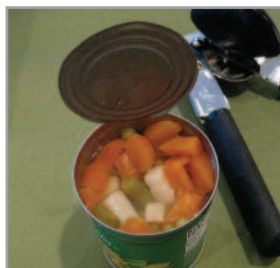
Most people with diabetes also have high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, it is important to eat less salt (sodium) because salt makes your blood pressure higher. If you eat less salt your blood pressure will go down.

Look for labels that say: low sodium, reduced sodium, sodium free, low salt, or no salt added. A lot of the salt we eat is “hidden” in foods that come in a box, can, or package.

**All of these foods have a lot of salt:**



**Canned soups**



**Canned vegetables**



**Cold cuts and hot dogs**



**Frozen dinners**



**Pizza**



**Noodle and rice mixes**



**French fries**



**Soy sauce**



**Pretzels and chips**



**Pickles**



**Fast food**



**Bread and muffins**

# Tips About Salt



*“My blood pressure went down when I cut out the instant noodles.”*



*“We use lemon juice, garlic, herbs, and spices now instead of salt.”*



*“It took me a couple of weeks, but then I didn’t want so much salt.”*



*“I don’t keep the salt shaker on the table anymore.”*

# You Can Do It

Choose one of these easy ideas or write down 1 or 2 things you will do for the next few weeks. Remember, little changes in your eating can make a big difference in your blood sugar.

- I will switch from juice or soda to diet soda.
- I will eat breakfast every morning.
- I won't eat seconds at dinner.
- I will order the small size instead of the super size at fast-food restaurants.
- I will pack a lunch sometimes instead of eating out.
- I will keep healthy snacks on hand, like cottage cheese, carrot sticks, hard boiled eggs, unbuttered popcorn, or sugar-free popsicles.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*“It was hard to stop drinking regular soda, but I’ve learned to like the taste of diet soda.”*





## What's in it for you?

- Being more active is one of the best things you can do to control your blood sugar.
- Moving more can help you lose weight, have more energy, and feel more upbeat.
- No matter how old you are, being active is good for you.

A lot of people say that walking is the easiest exercise for them. Many people walk with a friend. Walking is free, easy, and fun.

If you are not exercising, start with 10 minutes a day. It can be as simple as walking 5 minutes from your door and turning around and walking back.



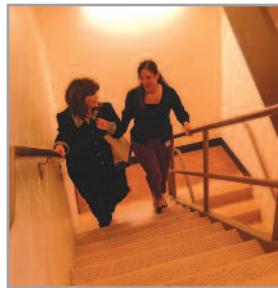
# Tips For Getting Started

You might be surprised that some of the things you do every day are exercise. Activities like housework and gardening keep you moving and can make you feel better.

Here are some easy ways to be active every day.



**Vacuuming**



**Using stairs**



**Mowing**



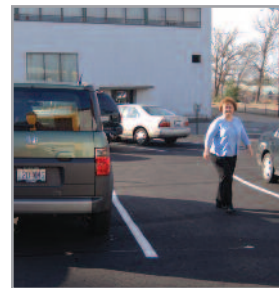
**Mall walking**



**Gardening**



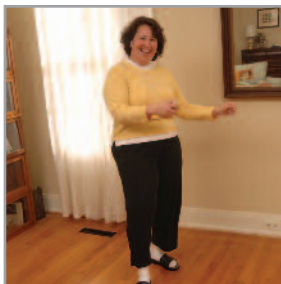
**Using barbells**



**Parking farther away**



**Going to a gym**



**Dancing**



**Using bands**



**Yoga**



**Walking a dog**

# Tips If You Have Trouble Walking

- You can stretch and lift weights while sitting in a chair. Ask your doctor if you can go to physical therapy to get some advice on how to start. Look for videos or books at your library.
- Stretch bands and wrist or ankle cuffs with weights can help build muscle strength. You can buy them at sports or discount stores.
- Community pools often have special water exercise classes. Call your local parks and recreation department.



*“I can still sit in my chair and lift weights. I just use soup cans.”*



*“I wheel myself around sometimes, instead of having someone push me.”*

# Exercise Will Get Easier

Your body needs time to get used to being more active. Be patient. It takes a few months for a new activity to become a habit.

## Steps for doing more:

- Begin by doing an activity for 10 minutes, two times per week.
- After a couple of weeks, add 2-5 minutes a day.
- When you feel comfortable doing more, add another day.
- You want to work up to 30 minutes of exercise at least 3-4 times a week.



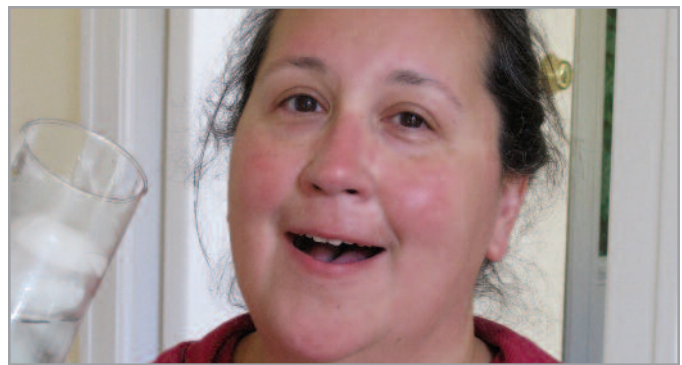
*“I wear a pedometer that counts the steps I take. I started at 1000 steps a day.”*



*“I found an exercise place just for women. I feel good there.”*

# Be Safe

- Ask someone to exercise with you.
- Start slowly. Stop if you feel any pain or have trouble catching your breath.
- Carry some “emergency sugar” in your pocket in case your blood sugar drops too low. A few packets of sugar or honey, three peppermints, a mini box of raisins, or some glucose tablets work well.
- Drink a lot of water. If you can’t have water when you exercise, drink a glass before you begin and a glass when you are finished.
- Carry something that says you have diabetes. Your pharmacist can help you order a bracelet.



# You Can Do It

Pick things YOU like to do. Try one of these suggestions, or write down 1 or 2 things you enjoy that make your body move.

- I will take a short walk every day.
- I will park farther away in a parking lot.
- I will dance for 20 minutes at home.
- I will get up and do small chores during TV commercials.
- I will take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- I will stretch for ten minutes when I wake up each day.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*“I feel better when I turn off the TV and go shoot some hoops.”*



# Checking Your Blood Sugar

Your body turns the food you eat into blood sugar. Blood sugar (or blood glucose) is what gives your body energy.

If your blood sugar is too low, your body does not have the energy it needs. It is very important to get your blood sugar back to normal quickly.

If your blood sugar is high for too long, it can damage your eyes, kidneys, heart and feet.

## How do I Know if I Need to Check My Blood Sugar at Home?

You and your doctor will decide whether you need to check your blood sugar at home. Not all people with diabetes need to do blood sugar checks. These are helpful for people who use insulin or other medicines that cause blood sugar levels to be too low.

If your diabetes is controlled by diet and/or metformin therapy, chances are you don't need to check your blood sugar at home.

If you are older, frail or are not able to check your blood sugar at home, talk to your doctor about other options.



*"My doctor and I talked about whether I need to check my blood sugar at home."*

# Checking Your Blood Sugar

## What do you need to know about your blood sugar machine?

Your blood sugar machine (also called a meter or monitor) gives you a number that tells you what your blood sugar is. There are many types of machines and all of them work differently. Talk with your doctor, diabetes nurse or pharmacist to learn exactly how to use your machine.

## When should you check your blood sugar?

Most people need to check their blood sugar before they eat breakfast. You may also need to check it at other times.

You and your doctor can decide what is best for you.

Check your blood sugar if you:

- Feel it is too high or too low
- Feel sick

## What's in it for you?

- If you know your blood sugar is too low or too high, then you can take action to fix it. This will help keep your blood sugar normal.
- If your blood sugar is normal, you will feel better.



*“I thought I could tell my blood sugar from the way I felt, but the only way to know for sure is to check it.”*



# Tips About Checking Blood Sugar



*"My doctor told me that everyone has trouble using their blood sugar machine at first."*



*"The nurse taught me to prick my finger on the side instead of the middle so it wouldn't hurt as much."*



*"I couldn't afford the test strips. But when I told the doctor, she found a way to help me."*

# Blood Sugar Lows

## How low is “too low”?

Blood sugar less than 70 is too low for everybody. For some people, blood sugar less than 80 or 90 may be too low. Talk with your doctor to decide what is too low for you.

## If your blood sugar is too low, you may feel:

- Shaky or nervous
- Sweaty or clammy
- Dizzy or confused
- Tired or hungry



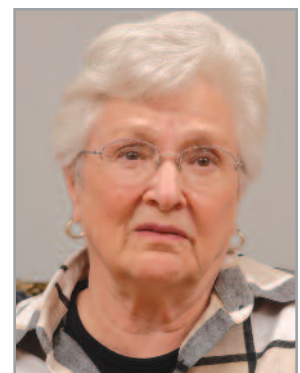
## Watch out!

People have different feelings when their blood sugar is too low. If you are not feeling right, check your blood sugar.

## If your blood sugar is too low, ask yourself:

- Did I skip a meal or eat my meal later than usual?
- Did I eat less than usual?
- Did I eat fewer carbs than usual?
- Did I exercise more than usual?
- Did I take too much medicine?
- Did my doctor just change my medicines?

All of these things can make your blood sugar go down.



**Talk to your doctor about your blood sugar at every visit.**

# Blood Sugar Lows

## What should you do if you feel like your blood sugar is too low?

Check your blood sugar right away.

If your blood sugar is below 70, you need to do these things **immediately**:

1. Get sugar into your body quickly. Drink half a glass of juice or regular soda, or chew some candy with sugar (chew it, don't suck it!).
2. Then, eat a small snack with protein, such as half of a sandwich or cheese and crackers.
3. Check your blood sugar again in 15 minutes to see if it has gone up.
4. If it is still too low, drink more juice or eat another piece of candy. Then call your doctor.

If your blood sugar is too low, it is very important to **do something about it**, even if you do not feel bad. If it continues to fall, you could pass out.



**Call 911 or go to the emergency room if you feel too sick to get a snack, or if after 30 minutes your blood sugar is not above 80.**

# Blood Sugar Highs

## How high is “too high”?

For most people, blood sugar more than 140 or 150 is too high. Blood sugar more than 200 is too high for everybody. Talk with your doctor to decide what your blood sugar should be.

## If your blood sugar gets too high you may:

- Feel very thirsty
- Start peeing more than usual
- Feel weak or tired
- Get blurry vision
- Feel just like you usually do

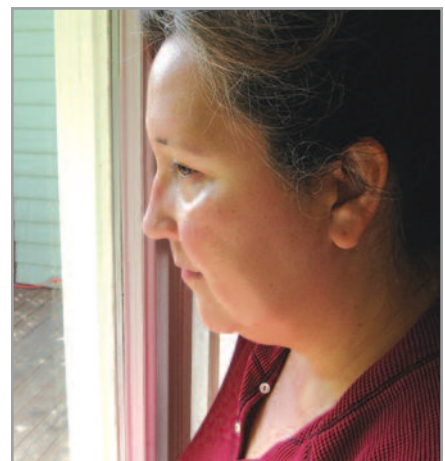
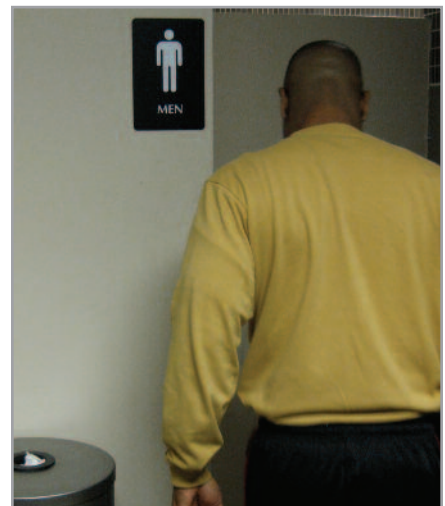
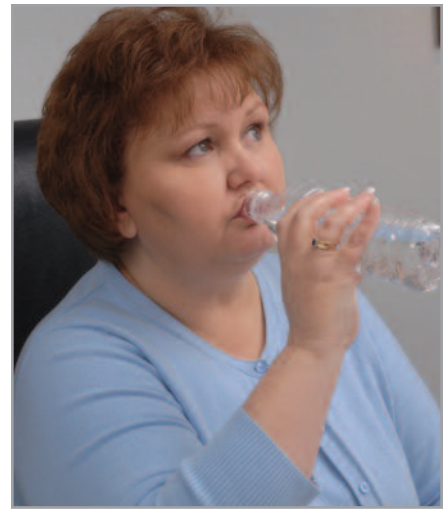
## Ask yourself these questions:

- Have I been sick?
- Did I eat more carbs than usual?
- Did I skip any of my medicines?
- Did I get less exercise than usual?
- Have I been under a lot of stress?

All of these things can make your blood sugar go up.

## What should you do if your blood sugar is too high?

- Drink lots of water, even if it feels like you are peeing too much.
- Cut down on carbs until your blood sugar comes down.
- Call your doctor.



# Putting It All Together

## 1. Always write down your blood sugar numbers in a log.

Show it to your doctor at every appointment.

## 2. Know your numbers.

For most people blood sugar should be:

- 80–120 first thing in the morning and before meals
- 100–140 at bedtime



## 3. Talk to your doctor.

Ask your doctor what your blood sugar levels should be during certain times of the day, such as in the morning and at bedtime. You may also want to ask your doctor what blood sugar levels are too low or too high for you. If your blood sugar is too high or too low more than once a week, call your doctor.

You can use the chart below to record the numbers.

Blood Sugar Levels	My Numbers
First thing in the morning and before meals	
At bedtime	
Too low	
Too high	

# You Can Do It

Remember that you are the most important person to manage your diabetes. Choose one of these ideas or write down 1 or 2 ways to help you take control of your blood sugar.

- I will check my blood sugar every morning, or as my doctor tells me to.
- I will write down my blood sugar numbers in my blood sugar log and take it to all my doctor visits.
- I will keep candy with me in case of an emergency.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## One other thing to think about: The A1c test

This is a blood test you get at the doctor's office or at the lab. It gives your doctor an idea of what your blood sugars have been over the last three months.

Ask your doctor what your A1c should be: \_\_\_\_\_



*“Keeping my blood sugar in control can be tricky. But when I know what it is, I can do something to fix it!”*

# Take Your Medicines

Most people with diabetes need to take one or more medicines to keep their blood sugar normal.

You may also need medicines for other health problems, like high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

It can be hard to keep track of so many medicines. This guide will help you.

Talk with your doctor about what medicines are right for you and your diabetes.



Remember, it is OK to ask your family or friends for help.



# Safety First

## Taking your medicine safely will help you feel better.

- Take your medicines at the same time every day. This helps keep your blood sugar from getting too high or too low.
- Don't skip meals or your blood sugar may go too low.
- Don't stop taking your medicines unless your doctor tells you to.

Call your doctor if your medicines:

- Don't have refills
- Make you feel sick
- Are too expensive
- Make your blood sugar too low



**Take your medicines to every doctor's visit. That way you and your doctor can keep better track of your medicines.**



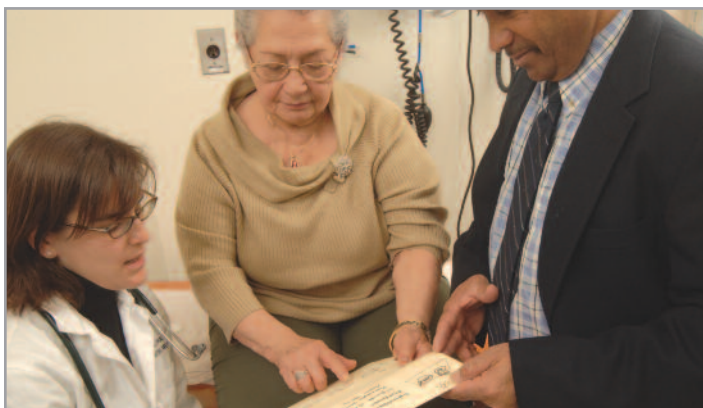
# Tips For Keeping Track Of Medicines



*“I have a pill box to remind me if I have taken my medicines each day.”*



*“My son and I made a calendar of all the medicines I take.”*



*“I bring a list of the medicines I am taking to my doctor.”*

# You Can Do It

Remember, taking your medicines safely can make a big difference in your blood sugar. Choose one of these easy ideas or write down 1 or 2 ways of keeping track of your medicines.

- I will take my medicines to my next doctor's appointment.
- I will use a pill box to help me keep track of my pills.
- I will ask my family to help me keep up with my medicines.
- I will ask my pharmacist for a list of all my medicines and what they are for.
- I will make a list of my medicines and keep it in my wallet.

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*“I stopped taking my medicine because it gave me diarrhea, but I didn’t want to tell my doctor. When I told him, he just changed my medicine.”*



*“I was worried I couldn’t pay for my medicines. When I told my doctor, she helped me find a way.”*

# Keeping Your Feet Healthy

Taking good care of your feet is one of the most important things you need to do if you have diabetes.

If you take good care of your feet, you can avoid cuts that won't heal and infections. These cuts and infections can lead to amputations.

Use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet every day.

Look for cuts, sores, or blisters.

If your skin is dry or cracked, put lotion on the top and bottom, but not between your toes.



# Cleaning And Trimming

Wash your feet in the bath or shower.

Use your fingers to make sure the water is not too hot. You may not be able to tell if it is too hot with your toes.



Don't soak your feet. Soaking causes dry skin and small cuts or cracks that can get infected.

Use something soft to clean or dry your feet.



Never use a stone, a razor blade, or anything hard or sharp on your feet.

Be sure to dry between your toes.



Cut your nails once a week after your bath or shower. Cut straight across with nail clippers.

If you have trouble, ask your doctor to help you find a foot doctor (podiatrist).



# Shoes And Socks

Wear comfortable shoes and clean cotton socks. Your shoes should cover your toes and give them plenty of room.



Change your socks if they get wet.



Feel inside your shoes before you put them on. Take out anything sharp or hard, like a pebble.



If you like to take your shoes off inside, wear slippers so you don't get cuts on your feet. Don't go barefoot.



# Talk To Your Doctor

## If the nerves in your feet are damaged, your feet may:

- Tingle or burn
- Feel like electricity or have a sharp, shooting pain
- Feel like they are falling asleep
- Feel numb

**Talk to your doctor  
if your feet feel this way.**

## Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Cuts, cracks, blisters, or sores
- Red, swollen, or hot feet or toes
- Pus or fluid
- Itchy feet



*“I ask my doctor to  
check my feet at  
each visit.”*

# You Can Do It

Remember, you are the most important person to protect your feet. Choose one of these ideas or write down one or two ways to take better care of your feet.

- I will wear slippers instead of going barefoot in the house.
- I will find a mirror to help see the bottom of my feet.
- I will ask my doctor whether I have the right kind of shoes.
- I will look at my feet for cuts, sores and blisters every day.

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*“Once I found a rock that I hadn’t felt with my foot. Now I check every day.”*

# Learn About Insulin

Before you had diabetes, your body made enough insulin to keep your blood sugar normal. Now that you have diabetes, you may need to take extra insulin to help control your blood sugar.

- Some types of insulin work fast and help control your blood sugar after you eat.
- Other insulin works slowly and gives you a steady amount of insulin that lasts all day.
- Some have a mixture of both fast and slow insulin that can be taken in one shot.





# Learn About Insulin

## Feeling like you failed?

Some people feel like they have failed if they can't control their blood sugar with pills. This is not true. For many people, insulin shots are the only way to keep blood sugar levels normal. You are not a failure if you have to use insulin.

## Feeling worried about bad things happening?

Insulin will NOT cause bad things to happen to your kidneys, eyes or feet. Taking insulin safely helps prevent these problems.

## Feeling scared about shots?

Many people are afraid of giving themselves shots. They think it will hurt. But most people who take insulin say giving themselves shots is very easy and usually does not hurt.



*“When I started taking insulin, I thought I had done something wrong. When my doctor told me that many people have to use insulin at some point, I felt better.”*



*“At first I was scared of the shot, but now it's something I do every day. The needle is tiny... not like getting a shot in the doctor's office.”*

# Using An Insulin Pen

## Get everything ready.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.



2. If you take more than one kind of insulin, check the label to make sure you have the right type ready.

3. Take the top off the pen. **If the insulin is cloudy, gently roll it between your fingers for 15 seconds.**



4. Use an alcohol pad to clean the end of the pen where the needle will go.



5. Take the needle out of the package and screw the tip onto the end of the insulin pen.



6. Take the top off of the needle.



# Using An Insulin Pen

7. To get the pen ready, turn the dial to 2.



8. Tap the insulin softly to push any air up to the top. Hold the needle in the air and push the button at the bottom of the pen.

You should see a drop of insulin at the tip of the needle. If you don't see a drop, turn the dial to 2 again, and start over.



## Give yourself the insulin.

1. Choose a place on your body that has some fat like:

- Your stomach (not too near the belly button)
- The back of your upper arm
- The outsides of your thighs or hips.



2. Clean the area with an alcohol pad or warm soapy water.



# Using An Insulin Pen

3. Turn the dial to the number of units of insulin your doctor told you to inject.



4. Pinch a bit of skin and stick the needle straight in all the way.

If you don't have a lot of fat, put the needle in at an angle.



5. Push the button in all the way and hold it there while you count to 6.

6. Pull the needle out.



7. Push on the area lightly with some cotton or tissue if it is bleeding, but do not rub it.

## Clean it up.

1. Put the top back on the needle and unscrew it from the pen.



2. Put the used needle in a plastic container, not in the trash. Your pharmacist can give you a container.



# Using An Insulin Syringe

## Get everything ready.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.

2. If you take more than one kind of insulin, check the label to make sure you have the right type ready. **If the insulin is cloudy, gently roll it between your fingers for 15 seconds.**

3. The first time you use the bottle, take off the plastic cap.

4. Wipe the rubber top with alcohol.



# Using An Insulin Syringe

## Give yourself the insulin.

1. Choose a place on your body that has some fat like:

- Your stomach (not too near the belly button)
- The back of your upper arm
- The outsides of your thighs or hips

2. Clean the area with an alcohol pad or warm soapy water.

3. Take the top off the needle. Pull the plunger back until it is lined up with the number of units of insulin you need.

4. Put the needle through the rubber top of the bottle. Push in the plunger. This will make it easier to pull the insulin out.

5. While the needle is still inside the bottle, turn the bottle upside down. Keep the tip of the needle in the liquid. Pull the plunger back until it is lined up with the number of units of insulin you need.

6. If you get an air bubble in your syringe, push the insulin back into the bottle and start over.



# Using An Insulin Syringe

7. Pinch a bit of skin and stick the needle in all the way. If you don't have a lot of fat, put the needle in at an angle.

8. Push the plunger in all the way.



9. Pull the needle out.

10. Push on the area lightly with some cotton or tissue if it is bleeding, but do not rub it.



## Clean it up.

When you are finished, place the used needles in a plastic container, not in the trash. Your pharmacist can give you a container.



# Other Things To Think About

## Storing your insulin

- Keep your insulin in the refrigerator, not in the freezer or on the counter. Some types of insulin can be stored outside the refrigerator after they are opened. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see if you can leave your insulin outside of the refrigerator.
- Never leave your insulin someplace where it could get too hot, like in a parked car. Ask your doctor or nurse how to keep insulin cool if you carry it with you.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how long you can keep your insulin bottle open. It may help to write on the bottle the date you opened it.

## Traveling with insulin

- If you travel outside of the USA, take your insulin and needles with you.
- If you have to buy insulin or syringes outside of the country, get help from a pharmacist so you get the right dose.



## Using needles safely

- Never share your needles with anyone.
- Keep new and used needles in a safe place away from children.



# You Can Do It

Remember, taking your insulin correctly makes a big difference in your blood sugar. Use these easy ideas, or write down your own ideas to help you feel more comfortable about taking insulin.

- I will talk with other people who use insulin.
- I will ask a friend or family member to stay with me the first few times I give myself a shot.
- I will practice giving shots to an orange.
- I will check my blood sugar before giving myself my insulin shot everyday.
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*“At first, I didn’t want to take shots, but I didn’t realize how much better I could feel. It made a big difference to me.”*

# Live Well With Diabetes

Remember, you are not alone. Like all of the people in this book, you can take charge of your life and live successfully with diabetes.



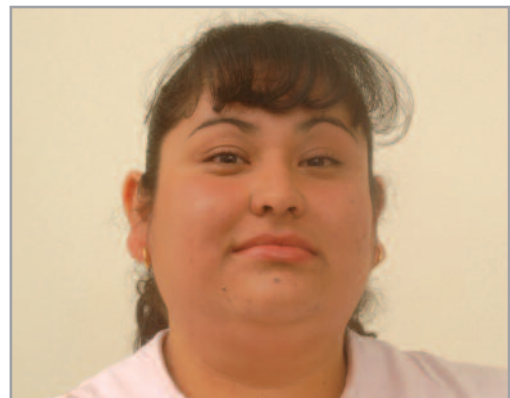
*“I am exercising and have more energy. I feel better about myself!”*



*“I have taken charge of my life, and I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished.”*



*“Having diabetes has opened my eyes to new things.”*



*“If I can do it, you can do it too.”*

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