

# Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#102 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

## Living *Well* with Diabetes





**Diabetes is a condition where your blood sugar is too high. Your body controls blood sugar with the help of a hormone called insulin. People with diabetes don't have enough insulin or can't use insulin well.**

**People with diabetes have a higher chance of:**

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Nerve damage
- Eye problems and blindness
- Kidney disease
- Early death

**If you have diabetes, you're not alone. One in 10 adult New Yorkers has been told they have diabetes.**

Diabetes is a serious disease — but you can still live a long and healthy life! Here's what you need to do.

## Take Care of Your Body

***Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.***

- Get off the bus or subway a stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Walk during your lunch break.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

***Eat a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight.***

- Eat more vegetables and fruit and less candy, sweets, chips and fried food.
- Drink water or seltzer instead of sugary drinks or juice.
- Cook more meals at home.



**Other things you can do:**

- Check your blood sugar as often as your doctor recommends.
- Keep your feet clean and dry. Wear comfortable shoes. Look at your feet every night for sores, and tell your doctor about any problems. Sores can lead to infection. Infection can lead to amputations.
- Brush and floss your teeth every day. See your dentist twice a year.
- Quit smoking. For help, including free medications and counseling, call 311 or 1-866-NYQUITS or visit [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com).

## Take Your Medicine Even if You Don't Feel Sick

It's very important to take your diabetes, blood pressure or cholesterol medicine every day to lower your chance of problems like heart disease and stroke. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to make your medicine plan simple — and talk about any questions, concerns or side effects you have.



## Know and Control Your ABCs

- **A1C** (Three-month blood sugar level): 7 or a number your doctor gives
- **Blood pressure:** Less than 140/90
- **Cholesterol:** Lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol
- **Smoking:** If you smoke, quit now.

## See Your Doctor Regularly

### Your doctor can help you:

- Check your A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Test your urine to check for kidney disease.
- Do a foot exam to check for changes in feeling and any sores.
- Get your eyes checked once a year.

### Talk with your doctor about:

- **Getting a flu shot every year.** People with diabetes who get flu get sicker than those who don't have diabetes.
- **Getting a pneumonia shot.**
- **Sexual problems.**
- Other ways you can lower your chance of problems like heart disease and stroke.

# What is A1C?

If you have diabetes, your doctor may talk about something called A1C. Your A1C is a number that shows how high your blood sugar has been in the last three months. Having higher blood sugar raises your risk of health problems.

Most adults should aim for an A1C around 7. Talk with your doctor about whether your goal should be higher or lower.



## More Information and Help

- If you need help finding free or low-cost health insurance or a doctor, call 311.
- For tools to help you track your blood sugar, call 311.
- For more information on diabetes, visit [nyc.gov/health/diabetes](https://nyc.gov/health/diabetes).

**CALL  
311**

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