

## Diabetes 101 for People Who Have Just Been Diagnosed

If you have just been diagnosed with diabetes, it's natural to feel nervous and a bit overwhelmed. Luckily, you do not have to face this new stage alone. At LifeSteps, we understand that managing diabetes care may seem complicated, and that people may need support when they are first learning how to handle it. That's why we have made Health Coaches available by phone, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no charge to you.

Health coaches are specially trained healthcare professionals, such as nurses, dietitians, respiratory therapists, and diabetes educators. These knowledgeable and caring healthcare professionals can help you learn everything you need to know about diabetes.

Once you are diagnosed with diabetes, your doctor may want you to learn techniques to monitor and manage your condition. Take things one step at a time, and don't try to do everything at once. The following four tips are a good place to start, and a health coach can help you understand and manage each one. To talk to a LifeSteps health coach, call 1-877-LIFE-123 or visit LifeSteps online at <http://MyStandard> or [www.asdlifesteps.com](http://www.asdlifesteps.com).



### Tip 1: Measure Your Blood Sugar Every Day

To help you manage your blood sugar levels, your doctor may ask you to measure your own blood sugar at home on a regular schedule. Write down the level each day, and take the log of your blood sugar levels to your next office visit to discuss with your doctor.



### Tip 2: See Your Doctor Regularly

When you are first diagnosed with diabetes, it's important that you see your doctor regularly to monitor your progress and blood sugar levels.

While at the doctor's office make sure to:

**Take off your shoes and socks.** People with diabetes may be at risk for foot ulcers or infections, so it's important to have the skin on your feet checked regularly for any sores, cuts, or discoloration.

**Ask about your hemoglobin A1c (also known as A1c).** This number reflects your average blood sugar level during the past few months and helps your doctor identify if you're on the right type and dose of medication.

**Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked.** People with diabetes are at higher-than-normal risk for heart trouble; monitoring your blood pressure and cholesterol can help you manage these risk factors for heart disease.

**Bring along all the medications you take, including any herbal medications.** Your doctor needs to know about all the medications you take. He or she can tell you whether you are taking any unnecessary medications or whether any of the medications you take might interact. Also, some over-the-counter or herbal medications can affect your blood sugar level, so it's important to discuss these with your doctor.



**Tip 3: Learn to Spot the Symptoms of Low and High Blood Sugar**

Your body has a way of telling you when your blood sugar is not right. If your blood sugar is too high, you may become very thirsty and start urinating frequently. You might also develop blurred vision or “floaters,” visible spots that seem to float around in your eye. High blood sugar can be a problem for you, as this may eventually cause complications such as vision loss, nerve damage, and kidney disease.

If your blood sugar gets too low, the problem is more immediate. People with low blood sugar may feel “cold and clammy,” or jittery. The symptoms of low blood sugar can also include hunger, weakness, confusion, dizziness, nausea, shakiness, and even convulsions.

It's helpful to talk with your doctor about a “response plan” so that you will know what to do if you develop symptoms of low blood sugar. Your doctor may give you a special medicine that you can use to quickly raise your blood sugar. Also, you can eat foods that contain “quick sugars,” which your body can absorb fast.

This table lists examples of quick-sugar foods and the amounts to eat if your blood sugar gets too low. Consider posting this list on the refrigerator and making your family members aware of its importance. If your blood sugar gets very low, and you become confused, they may be able to help.

Quick Sugar Foods	Amount
Table sugar	1 tablespoon
Fruit juice	½ cup
Regular soda pop	½ cup
Fat-free milk	1 cup
Raisins	2 tablespoons
Hard candy	3 pieces
Life Savers candy	8 pieces



**Tip 4: Learn to Exercise and Eat Right**

The way a person with diabetes eats is extremely important when it comes to controlling blood sugar and avoiding diabetes complications. Exercise is also essential. To find out if and how your diet needs to change, make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian (RD) or Certified Diabetic Educator (CDE) – or call and speak with a LifeSteps health coach. Ask, too, about how best to incorporate exercise into your life. Something as simple as walking every day can make all the difference when it comes to your health.