

# Making the most of your first office visit after your diabetes diagnosis

Your first office visit after your diabetes diagnosis is an important one. If you're like many people, you may have been surprised—even shocked—by your diagnosis. Many people do not hear anything their doctor says after the word *diabetes*. But over time people adjust to the diagnosis. What is important is to take an active role in your care so that you can live a healthy, happy life with diabetes. There is a lot you can do to move in that direction!

## It takes a team

Diabetes care can be complex. Your doctor can't be an expert in every area. So the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that people with diabetes get their care from a team put together by their doctors. Your team may include nurses, diabetes educators, and dietitians. Your doctor may also send you to other specialists, like an eye doctor and a foot doctor. But whoever is on your team, the most important member is **you**. Everyone on your team is there to work for your health. So don't hesitate to tell them what you want and need.



## The 4 parts to your first visit

According to the ADA, these 4 things should be part of your first visit:

### 1 Medical history

That means asking questions about your life and other health conditions you've had.

Here are some questions your team may ask. It's a good idea to think about the answers before your visit. Write them below:

#### What does your typical breakfast, lunch, and dinner look like?

Breakfast

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Lunch

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Dinner

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**What sort of physical activity, if any, do you do in the course of a week and how much time do you spend doing it?**

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Physical examination

That means measuring your height and weight, checking your heart and blood pressure, looking in your eyes and mouth, and asking about your dental health, among other things.

## 3 Check blood and urine

They'll check your blood sugar and your A1C (a measure of your average blood sugar during the past 2 to 3 months). They'll also do a blood test to check your cholesterol and blood fat levels.

## 4 Plan for managing your diabetes

This is a very important part of the visit. So make sure your team takes enough time for it. Your plan is made just for you. So be very clear with your team about what will work for you, and what won't. And be sure to ask them to explain anything you don't understand.

## The cornerstones of care

Your plan should include a healthy eating plan, a plan for staying active, a plan for taking medicines, and a plan for checking your blood sugar. These are the "cornerstones of care," which, along with a plan for health checkups, make up your diabetes care plan.

### Your meal plan

This part of your plan should include what you should eat, in what amounts, and when. Remember to let your team know what foods you like, so they can be included in your plan.



If there are any foods you should avoid, those should be listed too. Ask your team what foods you can substitute. Remember to find out if you should learn to count carbs.

### Your plan for physical activity

Find out what kinds of physical activity are best for you. Also find out what your activity goal is (how much time you should spend being active and how many days a week).



### Your diabetes medicine plan

Find out if you will need to take medicines. If so, find out which ones and ask how to take and store them.

### Your plan for checking blood sugar

Make sure you know when, how often, and how you should check your blood sugar. Also make sure you know what your goals should be and steps to take if you're not meeting your goals.



## Know your team

To work well with your team, it's important to know the members by name and to know how to get in touch with them. Write the names and phone numbers of your team members below. Don't hesitate to call a member of the team whenever you have questions or concerns.

### The diabetes care team

Team member	Role	Name	Telephone number
<b>You and your loved one</b>	Partners in diabetes care; the most important members of the team		
<b>Primary health care professional</b>	Doctor you see for general checkups and if you are sick; may provide diabetes care if he or she cares for many people with diabetes		
<b>Endocrinologist</b>	Doctor who specializes in the treatment of diabetes		
<b>Diabetes educator</b>	Nurse or other health care professional who specializes in teaching people about diabetes		
<b>Nurse</b>	Health care professional who can help teach you about diabetes and parts of your care		
<b>Registered dietitian</b>	Specialist in nutrition; can help you make your meal plan		
<b>Cardiologist</b>	Heart doctor		
<b>Podiatrist</b>	Foot doctor		
<b>Ophthalmologist</b>	Eye doctor		
<b>Nephrologist</b>	Kidney doctor		
<b>Dentist</b>	Health care professional who cares for your teeth		
<b>Pharmacist</b>	Person who is licensed to prepare and dispense medicines		
<b>Emergency contact</b>	Person the team should contact if you and your loved one need help in an emergency		
<b>Other contacts</b>			

