

LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

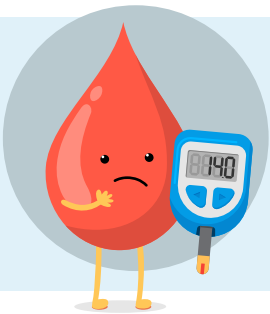


WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition where your glucose, also called your blood sugar, is too high. Your pancreas makes a hormone called insulin that helps regulate your blood sugar. In people with diabetes, their bodies do not make enough insulin, or their bodies cannot use it well enough to keep their blood sugar levels in check. This causes blood sugar to get too high.

Diabetes is very common nationally, **but rates in Louisiana are even higher.**

We are here for you as your partner! Your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana health coach can work with you to stick to your PCP's recommended treatment plan. For more information about diabetes and how Blue Cross can support you on your path to optimal health, visit www.bcbsla.com/Stronger or call **1-800-317-2299**.



High blood sugar levels can cause problems like:

- » extreme thirst
- » slow wound healing
- » dizziness
- » frequent urination
- » tiredness
- » hunger

Over time, increased blood sugar can lead to serious health issues like eye, kidney or nerve damage, limb amputation and a higher risk for strokes or heart disease.

The good news is that making lifestyle changes can be a very effective way for most people to control their blood sugar, which can prevent or lower their risks from diabetes.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS



You should have a primary care provider (PCP) you see for most of your medical needs, when you are sick or injured. It's important to have regular appointments with your PCP, between two to four times a year, to know your blood sugar numbers. Your family and medical history can also affect your risk for diabetes, so it's important to have a conversation with your PCP about your individual risk.



Your PCP can take blood samples and test your blood sugar levels to see if they are within a healthy range. This includes an important blood test called the **A1C**, which looks at your average blood sugar over several months.



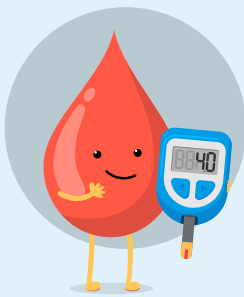
Ask your PCP about glucometers and other home blood sugar monitoring options. You will need to check your blood sugar daily so you can see what causes it to go up or down. What you eat, what time of day you eat and doing high-stress activities can all affect your blood sugar. You should keep track of your at-home readings and share these with your PCP during office visits.



Your PCP can work with you on a treatment plan based on your individual health needs, which may include medication. If your PCP prescribes drugs to help keep your blood sugar under control and/or protect your kidneys, it's very important that you take the medication exactly as you're told to do. If you are concerned about taking a drug because of costs, side effects or other issues, let your PCP or pharmacist know, and ask about other options.

LIVING WELL FOR HEALTHY BLOOD SUGAR

Here are several lifestyle changes and healthy habits you can adopt to help keep your blood sugar in a healthy range.



A1C Test Scores
4.0 - 14.0
 EXCELLENT POOR



EAT A HEALTHY DIET



GET SCREENED



GET REGULAR EXERCISE



MANAGE WEIGHT

WARNING SIGNS OF BLOOD SUGAR ISSUES



It's important to be mindful of your blood sugar levels to prevent **hyperglycemia** (when your blood sugar is too high) and **hypoglycemia** (when your blood sugar is too low).

Having high blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia) can cause problems like tiredness, dizziness, hunger, extreme thirst, frequent urination and slow wound healing. Over time, increased blood sugar can lead to serious health issues like eye, kidney or nerve damage, limb amputation and a higher risk for strokes or heart disease.



Some additional signs of high blood sugar are headaches, trouble concentrating, blurred vision and high blood sugar levels. Ask your PCP what blood sugar range is considered high for you and what you should do to stay in a healthy range.

Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) can happen when blood sugar levels drop because of skipped or late meals, added physical activity or medication needing to be adjusted. If you feel hungry, nervous, shaky, sweaty, dizzy or sleepy, this could mean your blood sugar levels are too low.



It's best to prevent low blood sugar. Ask your PCP about carrying sugar packets, glucose tablets or other foods or supplements with you at all times in case your blood sugar drops. When you feel any of the above symptoms, check your blood sugar level if you can. If the reading is **below 70**, your blood sugar is low.

If your symptoms are severe, call 911 or get to a healthcare provider immediately.