

Molina's myhealthmylife

a newsletter just for New York members

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What is diabetes?



Diabetes is a chronic (long-term) disease that keeps your body from processing foods the right way. There are three main types of diabetes.

- **Type 1 diabetes:** Your body does not make insulin.
- **Type 2 diabetes:** Your body may still make insulin, but it does not work well. With Type 1 and 2, sugar builds up in your blood.
- **Gestational diabetes:** When you get diabetes during pregnancy.

Things you can do to stay healthy with diabetes:

1. Check your blood sugar as often as prescribed by your doctor.
2. Take your medicine as prescribed.
3. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
4. Exercise regularly*

*Always talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

You are not alone

At first, having diabetes can be hard to deal with and scary. The good news is you are not alone. Ask your doctor about classes, support groups and other services for people with diabetes.

Why should I control my blood sugar?

Taking control makes a difference! High blood sugar can lead to problems such as:

- Heart disease or damage
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Circulation problems
- Eye disease
- Kidney disease or damage

Things you can do to prevent problems

How often	Actions
Every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow your meal plan • Exercise • Find positive ways to deal with stress • Brush and floss your teeth • Take your medicine as prescribed • Check your blood sugar • Check your feet • Keep a log book of your blood sugar and meals
Every 3 to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an A1c test
Every 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your dentist
Every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fat) checked • Have a kidney test • Have a foot exam • Have a flu shot • Have a dilated eye exam
At every office visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your feet checked • Have your blood sugar checked • Have your blood pressure, weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI) checked • Set your blood sugar goals • Take your blood sugar meter and log to your doctor's visit
Other things to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if you need any other vaccines like pneumonia, Hep B, HPV, TDAP, shingles or COVID-19 shots. • If you smoke, vape or dip, ask about a program to help you quit. • Ask about a sick day plan. • If you are overweight, losing ten pounds can make a big difference in controlling your blood sugar.

Sources: Diabetes.org, Heart.org , CDC

Know your numbers!

Heart disease is one of our nation's biggest health problems. It's the #1 killer of men and women in the United States. Managing your blood pressure and cholesterol can lower your chances of developing or slow down heart disease. Blood pressure numbers and cholesterol levels are important in heart disease. Please read the chart below. It will tell you how your blood pressure is doing and when to take action. If you don't know your numbers, ask your doctor.



Blood pressure numbers

Blood pressure type	Systolic mm Hg (top number)	Diastolic mm Hg (bottom number)	What to know
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80	These numbers are considered normal. Talk with your doctor about ways to keep your numbers in the normal range.
Elevated	120 – 129	Less than 80	With elevated blood pressure, you will likely get high blood pressure unless you take steps to control it.
High blood pressure STAGE 1	130 - 139	80-89	At stage 1, your doctor will likely prescribe lifestyle changes and may consider blood pressure medicine for you.
High blood pressure STAGE 2	140 or higher	90 or higher	At stage 2, your doctor will likely prescribe blood pressure medicine and lifestyle changes.
Crisis	Higher than 180	Higher than 120	Call your doctor right away!

Know about cholesterol

Cholesterol moves through the blood on proteins called “lipoproteins.” There are two types of lipoproteins:

- **HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein)** – is called the “good cholesterol” because it absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver. The liver then flushes it out of the body. High levels of HDL can lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- **LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein)** – is called the “bad cholesterol.” High levels of LDL raise your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Here’s what you need to know about LDL:

- When your body has too much LDL, it can build up on the walls of your blood. This buildup is called plaque.
- If plaque builds up, it can narrow the insides of your blood vessels. This narrowing is bad because it blocks blood flow to and from your heart and other organs.
- When blood flow to your heart is blocked, it can cause a heart attack or stroke.

Tips to control blood pressure and cholesterol

- See your doctor for routine checkups and blood tests.
- Know your numbers!
- Take your medicine daily, as prescribed.
- Eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats.
- Avoid foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium (salt).
- Avoid fried foods, fast foods, fatty meats, and whole-milk dairy products.
- Exercise for at least 150 minutes each week or as agreed upon with your primary care provider (PCP).
- Lose weight, if needed.
- Do not smoke or use nicotine products, like vaping or chewing tobacco.

Sources: CDC

Simple tips to get an accurate blood pressure reading

These common mistakes can cause your blood pressure reading to be incorrect. The numbers show how much each mistake can change your reading. Click here to view the [“7 Simple Tips to Get an Accurate Blood Pressure Reading” infographic](#) from the American Medical Association.

Use the correct cuff size.

If the cuffs are too small, add 2-10 mm hg.

Put the cuff on a bare arm.

Cuff over clothing adds 5-50 mm hg.

Don’t have a conversation.

Talking or active listening adds 10 mm hg.

Support back/feet.

Unsupported back and feet add 6 mm hg.

Support arm at heart level.

Unsupported arm adds 10 mm hg.

Empty bladder first. Full bladder adds 10 mm hg.

Keep legs uncrossed.

Crossed legs add 2-8 mm hg.

Source: [American Medical Association](#)

Healthy oral habits at every age



Healthy oral habits can improve your overall health at every age. Just take a look!

Ages: Newborn to age 2

Healthy oral habits

- Massage your newborns' gums with a clean washcloth twice a day
- Once their teeth come in, brush their teeth and gum line at least twice a day with a soft toothbrush
- Don't use toothpaste
- Breastfeed your baby if you can
- Follow the doctor's advice for a healthy diet after weaning
- Schedule and regularly attend doctor's office visits to help find any developmental and medical needs early on

The benefits

- Helps with teething discomfort
- Starts the baby off with good oral habits



Ages: 2 to 6 years

Healthy oral habits

- At age 2, start using a smear of fluoride toothpaste on the toothbrush
- Don't let your child swallow toothpaste
- Once your child learns NOT to swallow toothpaste, start using more toothpaste
- Never use more than a pea size amount of toothpaste until after age 6
- Brush teeth and along the gum line with a soft toothbrush twice a day
- Parents should brush young children, then ask them to "get what I missed."
- Brush for your child until you know your child can clean their teeth on their own (usually around age 9 to 10)
- Start flossing daily when the child's teeth begin touching around age 2 to 3
- Eat a variety of foods and a rainbow of colors at each meal
- Limit sweet foods and drinks to special occasions
- Visit the dentist for regular teeth cleanings
- Ask the dentist about tooth sealants
- Schedule and regularly attend doctor's office visits to help find any developmental and medical needs early on

The benefits

- Encourages good oral health habits
- Lowers the chance of tooth decay
- Lowers the chance of painful teeth (children in pain have a harder time paying attention and learning)



Ages: 6 to 20 years

Healthy oral habits

- Use only a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Brush your teeth, along your gum line and tongue each morning and night
- Rinse your mouth daily with an antiseptic mouthwash.
- Never swallow toothpaste or mouthwash
- Floss daily
- Use a new toothbrush every 3 months or when the bristles are worn.
- Limit sweet foods and drinks to special occasions
- Eat a variety of foods and a rainbow of colors at each meal
- Schedule and regularly attend doctor's office visits to help find any developmental and medical needs early on
- Don't smoke or use any tobacco products
- Visit the dentist for regular cleanings
- Ask the dentist about sealants when you prepare for the school year

The benefits

- Lowers the chance of tooth decay
- Lowers the chance of painful teeth and bad breath (can affect making friends, being social, and having self-esteem)
- Lowers the chance of tooth loss and changes in facial appearance



Ages: 21 years and older

Healthy oral habits

- Use a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Brush your teeth, along your gum line and tongue each morning and night
- Rinse your mouth daily with an antiseptic mouthwash
- Never swallow toothpaste or mouthwash
- Floss daily
- Use a new toothbrush every 3 months or when the bristles are worn
- Limit sweet foods and drinks to special occasions
- Eat a variety of foods and a rainbow of colors at each meal
- Don't smoke or use any tobacco products
- Visit the dentist for a yearly teeth cleaning
- Visit your doctor yearly to help manage any medical conditions you have
- If you have dentures, clean them daily with a cleaner your dentist gives you, and brush your gums and tongue each morning and night

The benefits

- Lowers the chance of tooth loss and changes in facial appearance (this is important in public facing jobs)
- Lowers the chance of painful teeth and bad breath (can affect making friends, being social, and having self-esteem)
- Lowers the chance of problems that come with some medical conditions
- For Example: Periodontal disease can cause preterm labor, pneumonia, and infections in the chambers or heart valves



Sources: American Dental Association, Mayo Clinic

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