

# Problem Solving

# PROBLEM SOLVING

---

There are many areas of your life that diabetes affects. Planning ahead of time can help you be prepared in different situations.

## Driving and Traveling with Diabetes

Taking care of diabetes when you are traveling is different than when you are at home. It is important to plan ahead when traveling.

- **Have supplies.** Keep all of your diabetes supplies with you (medicines, blood sugar monitor, snacks, etc.). Keep them in your carry-on bag and not in your checked luggage. Pack extra supplies.
- **Check your blood sugar.** If you have a low blood sugar, treat it right away.
- **Carry snacks and glucose tablets.**
- **Stay hydrated.**
- **Stretch your legs.** It is important to stretch your legs to improve blood flow.
- **Be aware of time zone differences.** If your medicines need to be taken at certain times, work with your provider on the best way to work through time zone changes.
- **Wear medical identification.**

## Diabetes in the Workplace

It is important to talk to your manager or co-workers and tell them that you have diabetes. This will help them understand:

- You may have to adjust your schedule for provider appointments.
- You may need to take breaks or eat throughout your shift.
- You may have to inject yourself with insulin or take medicines.
- If an emergency happens, how they can help you.

You should always provide your employer with emergency contacts in case of an emergency. Diabetes is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This means that you cannot be discriminated against in the work place. For more information visit the Americans with Disabilities Act website ([www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)).

## **Medical Identification (ID)**

A medical ID speaks for you when you cannot. It is a good idea to wear a medical ID when you have diabetes. If something happens to you, it lets people know that you have a medical condition.

Bracelets or necklaces can be engraved with your condition and other emergency information. This allows for faster and better treatment.

When wearing a medical ID your medical information will be available to medical staff and emergency responders no matter where you are traveling. This is especially important when you are traveling alone.

## **Putting the Pieces Together**

Controlling your blood sugar can be a challenge. If you see a problem or an unexpected change try to figure out what might have happened. Ask yourself what you might do to fix it now or prevent it next time. Ask these questions:

- **What is the problem?**
- **What could have caused this?**
- **What can I do about it now?**
- **Did the solution work?**
- **How can I prevent this from happening again?**

Each new problem that you work through will help prepare you for the next. It is important to find people in your life that can support you in your diabetes management. Help your loved ones understand more about diabetes by educating them. When they know more, they can be more supportive.

## Know Your Goals

Talk to your provider to set individual goals.

Test	Target Range	My Numbers
<b>Blood Sugar:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A1c (every 3-6 months)</li> <li>• Before Meal Blood Sugar</li> <li>• After Meal Blood Sugar (2 hours)</li> <li>• Bedtime Blood Sugar</li> </ul>	Less than 7% 80-130 mg/dL Less than 180 mg/dL 110-150 mg/dL	
<b>Blood Pressure</b> (every visit)	Less than 130/80 mmHg	
<b>Cholesterol and Lipids</b> (yearly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LDL (“bad” cholesterol)</li>   <li>• HDL (“good” cholesterol)</li>   <li>• Triglycerides</li> </ul>	Less than 70 mg/dL <b>or</b> Less than 55 mg/dL if you have heart disease  Over 40 mg/dL (male), Over 50 mg/dL (female)  Less than 150 mg/dL	
<b>Kidney Labs</b> (yearly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microalbuminuria (urine)</li> <li>• eGFR</li> </ul>	Less than 30 mg Over 90 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Weight and BMI</b> (every visit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body mass index (BMI) is a measurement based on your weight in relation to your height, and applies to most adults</li> </ul>	BMI: 18.5 – 24.9 (Asian BMI: 18.5 – 22.9)	

<b>Exam</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>My Last Exam</b>
<b>Comprehensive Foot Exam</b> (yearly)	Skin, muscle, sensation and circulation assessment.	
<b>Dilated Eye Exam or Optimap</b> (yearly)	Dilation causes your pupils to widen, allowing in more light and giving your provider a better view of the back of your eye to look for retinopathy, cataracts, glaucoma.  Optimap takes a picture of the back of your eye to look for retinopathy, cataracts, glaucoma.	
<b>Dental Examination</b> (6 months – year)	Routine check for periodontal disease	

## **Advocating for Your Health**

It is important to speak up and take charge of your health. This means visiting with your provider throughout the year. Be honest about what you are doing or not doing. Between visits you may want to write down questions or concerns to discuss at your next visit. Make sure to be prepared. You should bring with you:

- A list of questions and concerns.
- Your blood sugar meter or blood sugar logs.
- A list of the medicines you take

Possible things that you might want to discuss with your provider:

- Blood sugar levels
- A1c results
- Meal planning
- Changes in your weight
- Physical activity
- How to quit smoking
- Side effects or concerns about your medicines
- Anything that makes it difficult to take care of yourself (medicines, medical costs, feelings, etc.)

It is important that you make the most of each visit. Talk with your provider about the things that are most important to you. Make sure that you understand the plan before you leave.

## Changing Your Behavior

Making and keeping healthy lifestyle changes might seem overwhelming. There may be many behaviors that you want or need to change. It is important that you pick one area that you want to work on first before moving to the next area. Creating a new habit such as walking the neighborhood once a week, de-stressing by reading a good book each evening or including at least one healthy food choice at lunchtime can make all the difference.

These steps can help you create a healthy habit.

### 1. Identify one area of your diabetes that needs work or change:

- Healthy eating
- Monitoring
- Reducing risks
- Healthy coping
- Stress reduction
- Taking medications
- Being active

### 2. Identify your thoughts, feelings and attitudes: Why is it important that you work on this area first? Why did you choose this as your goal?

### 3. Set a goal: You are more likely to be successful if you make your goal S.M.A.R.T. Start your goal with the words “I will”.

**S. M. A. R. T.**

<b>Specific</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<b>Attainable</b>	<b>Relevant</b>	<b>Time-Based</b>
What exactly do you want to do?	Can you measure the progress of your goal?	Is your goal doable? Is it too much to ask?	How will your goal help manage your diabetes?	Did you give yourself a specific time frame to reach this goal?

Let's look at an example: I will check my blood sugar each morning for the next month.

- ✓ I want to check my blood sugar. This goal is **specific**.
- ✓ I will check my blood sugar once a day. This goal is **measurable**.
- ✓ Once a day is doable for me. This goal is **attainable**.
- ✓ It will help me understand if my diabetes medicines are working. This goal is **relevant**.
- ✓ I will work on this goal for 1 month. This goal is **time-based**.

#### **4. Determine your confidence level:**

It is important that you are confident in your ability to reach your goal. If you are not confident, you may need to change or revise your goal to make it more attainable. Using the example above, if checking blood sugar once a day is unrealistic for you, you might change your goal to “I will check my blood sugar 5 times every week”. The more confident you are at reaching your goal, the more likely it is that you will achieve it.

#### **5. Evaluate your progress:**

It is important to review your goal and see if you are staying on track to achieving it. You might evaluate your progress daily, weekly or monthly. Ask yourself, how often am I completing my goal?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Half of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

If you are not meeting your goal at “most of the time” or “all of the time,” you might need to look at your goal and see how you can make it achievable.

- Why were you not successful?
- What can you do to be successful?

Behavior change is not always easy. Taking small steps in the right direction leads toward bigger goals becoming more achievable. Getting support from others can help keep you on task. Support may come from:

- Family and friends
- Co-workers
- Support groups and community members
- Neighbors
- Diabetes websites

Make sure to celebrate your successes. Rewards might help keep you on task and give you something to work toward. Keep in mind, rewards should be something you enjoy that does not take away from your goals!