



## Staying Healthy When You Have Diabetes

**If you have diabetes, you have an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. But there are things that you can do to help lower this risk.**

One way to remember how to stay healthy is to think of your "ABCs":

- **"A" is for "A1C"** – A1C is a blood test. It shows what your average blood sugar level has been during the last few months.
- **"B" is for "blood pressure"** – Managing your blood pressure is just as important as managing your blood sugar. High blood pressure puts you at risk for heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.
- **"C" is for "cholesterol"** – Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the blood. High cholesterol also increases your risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other serious problems.

### Lifestyle Changes

- **Make healthy food choices** – Eat lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. Limit the amount of meat and fried or fatty foods that you eat.
- **Be active** – Try to do something active for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week. Even gentle forms of exercise, like walking, are good for your health.
- **Stop smoking** – Smoking increases the chance that you will have a heart attack or stroke, or develop cancer. If you are having trouble quitting, your doctor or nurse can help.
- **Lose weight, if you have excess body weight** – This can help lower the risk of many health problems.
- **Avoid alcohol** – Alcohol can increase blood sugar and blood pressure.



## A1C Level and Average Blood Sugar

The A1C blood test tells you what your average blood sugar level has been for the past 2 to 3 months. This table lists which A1C levels go with which average blood sugar levels.

If your A1C level is (percent):	That means your average blood sugar level during the past 2 to 3 months was about (mg/dL):
5	97
6	126
7	154
8	183
9	212
10	240
11	269
12	298
13	326
14	355

## Ways to Get Your ABC's Under Control

What you can do	Helps with A1C	Helps with Blood Pressure	Helps with Cholesterol
Take your medicines every day	X	X	X
Eat a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol but rich in fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy products	X	X	X
Limit the amount of salt (sodium) you eat		X	
Be active	X	X	X
Lose weight if you are overweight	X	X	X
Avoid alcohol	X	X	