



Your Diabetes Toolkit

Take control of type 2 diabetes

Living with type 2 diabetes.

“You have diabetes.”

Maybe the words took your breath away. *Me? Really?* Or maybe they weren’t such a surprise. You might have had some warning.

Either way, it’s what you do after you hear you have type 2 diabetes that matters most.

Making a choice.

Every year, over a million adults in the United States are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. And each one faces a choice: Keep going down the same path — or make some changes. This booklet is filled with tips and tools that may help make this choice easier.

If you choose the *I-can-do-this* approach, there’s good news. It can make a difference in how good you feel — and how healthy you stay.

Of course, change is not always easy. But millions of people do it — and you can too.

So whether you’ve just been diagnosed or you need to hit the refresh button, use what you learn in this booklet and from your doctor to set a solid foundation for your new way of life.*

You’ve got this.

What is type 2 diabetes?

Insulin is a hormone that helps move glucose — a type of sugar — from your blood into your cells. Your body uses glucose as fuel. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn’t produce enough insulin or can’t use the insulin it makes.

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*Check your benefit plan to see what services may be available to help you.

It takes a team.

To live well with diabetes, you'll need a game plan. Your health depends on it. But you don't have to do it alone.

There are many types of health professionals who can help you learn to take good care of yourself and manage your diabetes.* This list is intended to help you understand the type of care each one provides.

Your primary care doctor. Your doctor can coordinate your care — and help connect you with other health professionals when needed.

A diabetes educator. This expert can help you learn skills to manage your condition at home — from checking your blood sugar to taking your diabetes medicines properly.

An endocrinologist. This is a doctor who specializes in treating hormone conditions, such as diabetes. This type of specialist can be particularly helpful if you're having trouble managing your condition.

An eye care professional and a dentist. Diabetes raises your risk of vision problems and gum disease. So you'll need regular checkups of your eyes and mouth.

A registered dietitian. This nutrition expert can help teach you how to prepare meals that are good for you — and that you'll like. You'll learn how to follow a meal plan and how food affects your blood sugar.

A podiatrist. You may see a foot doctor to help prevent infections of the feet and lower legs.

An exercise specialist. If you need help developing a fitness routine, your doctor may suggest you work with an expert.

A mental health counselor. Living with a chronic condition can be challenging. If you're having trouble coping, ask your doctor for a referral.

Gather your support crew.

Of course, your family and friends can be a vital part of your team too. Tell them how they can help you. You might invite them to join you for daily walks, for example. Or ask them to help you prepare healthy meals.

You may also be interested in:

A support group. You can meet others living with diabetes — and share tips. Your doctor or diabetes educator may be able to recommend one.

Diabetes classes. Local hospitals and clinics may offer programs in your area. Or you can [take an online course](#).

Need an assist?

There's one other place you might turn for help — and it may surprise you. It's your workplace. Some companies offer programs to help employees and their families manage diabetes, lose weight and improve their health. Ask human resources what help is available to you. Some services may be covered by your health plan — so be sure to check your benefits too.

*Check your benefit plan to see what services may be covered.

Taking control:

3 ways to move forward.

I can do this!

Those are powerful words. And they're worth repeating to yourself when you're managing diabetes. You have the power to take charge of your condition — and lower your chances of serious heart, eye, kidney and other complications.

Where can you start? Here are three classic steps to help protect your health.

1. Make smart food choices.

Your doctor — or a dietitian — can help you create a meal plan that keeps your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol in a healthy range.

There's no one-size-fits-all diabetes diet. So you can still choose foods you enjoy. In general, you'll need to:

- Eat a variety of foods, including veggies and fruits, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, healthy fats (such as olive or canola oil), and lean meats or meat substitutes
- Avoid eating too much food or too much of one type of food
- Space your meals throughout the day
- Not skip meals

Turn to [page 8](#) to learn about diabetes superfoods that are great to include in your diet.

2. Move more.

Regular exercise can help lower your blood sugar. In fact, you might even be able to use less diabetes medicine if you stay active.*

Plus, exercise may lower your risk of heart disease and stroke, help you drop pounds and ease stress.

Most adults should aim for at least 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week. Add strength exercises on two or more days a week.

If you've been inactive, start slowly. You might begin by exercising in 10-minute sessions — and gradually build from there. Walking is a great exercise for beginners.

3. Take your medicine.

You may be able to manage type 2 diabetes with diet and exercise alone. If not, your doctor may prescribe diabetes pills — and possibly insulin as well — to help control your blood sugar.

Work closely with your doctor to take your medicine exactly as prescribed. Learn how and when to take it — and speak up if you have questions.

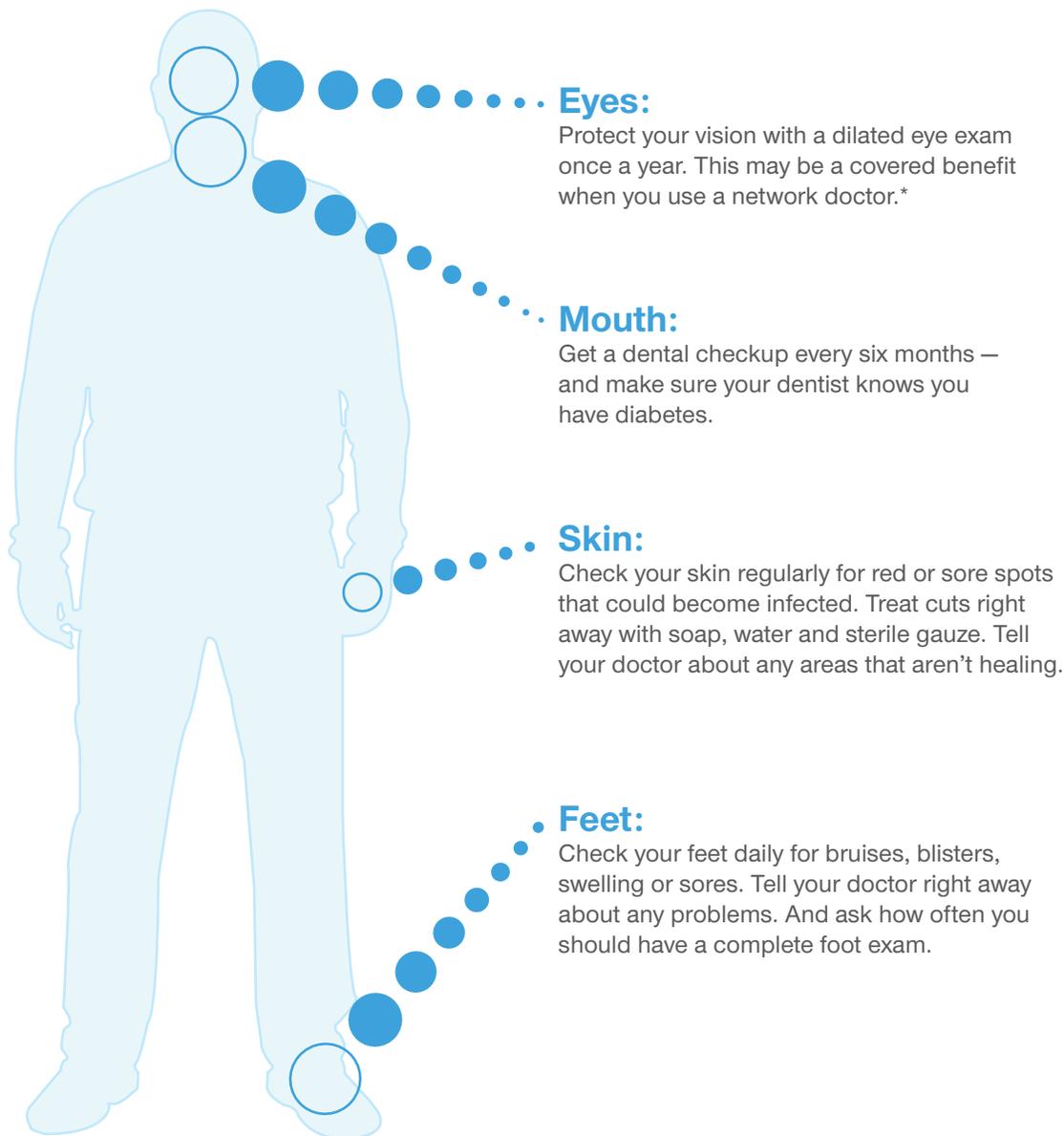
Most important, remember that your medicine works best when combined with a healthy diet and exercise.

*Talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level or changing your medication dosage.

Stay well head-to-toe.

Diabetes can take a toll on different parts of your body. But finding problems early — and getting treatment — may help protect your health.

Talk with your doctor about the screenings and self-care that you may need.



*A dilated eye exam may fall under your medical benefits or any vision benefits you have. You may be responsible for deductibles, copays or coinsurance that apply.

5 gentle skin-care tips.

People with diabetes are prone to dry, itchy skin. That's partly because when blood sugar is high, the body loses fluid. If your skin cracks, that could lead to a dangerous infection.

That's why you want to do all you can to care for your skin. Of course, it's important to control your blood sugar. But these daily habits may help head off problems too.

1. **Watch it at the faucet.** Hot water can leave skin parched. Take only warm showers and baths — and don't linger too long.
2. **Stay on the mild side.** Wash with gentle soaps and shampoos. And skip bubble baths.
3. **Moisturize well.** After bathing, slather on a moisturizer. But don't put lotion between your toes — too much trapped moisture there can allow fungus to grow. Ask your doctor what skin-care items may be right for you.
4. **Stay hydrated.** This can help keep your skin moist. When the air in your home is dry, using a humidifier may help as well.
5. **Nourish your skin.** Make sure your diet includes foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tofu, walnuts and flaxseed.

Testing, testing, ABC.

Learning your ABCs takes on new meaning when you have diabetes.

As part of your regular checkups, your doctor will want to track three important numbers that say a lot about your health:

A is for A1C. The A1C test measures your average blood sugar level over the past two or three months. Along with your daily blood sugar results, this test helps you know how well you're managing your condition.

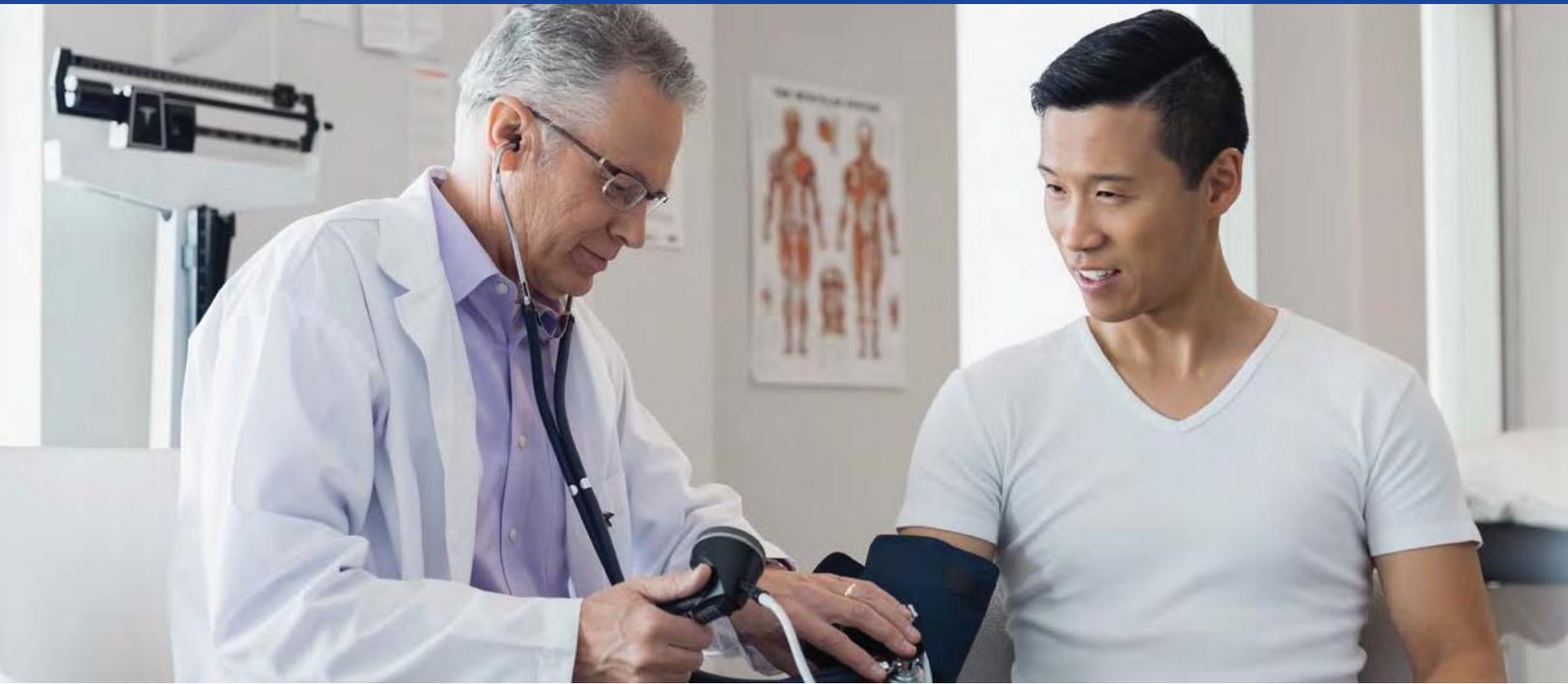
B is for blood pressure. If your blood pressure is too high, it might raise your risk for a heart attack, a stroke or kidney disease.

C is for cholesterol. Diabetes and high cholesterol often go hand in hand. If certain kinds of fat build up in your blood, that may lead to heart disease.

Talk with your doctor about the right ABC goals for you — and how often you need to be tested. You can use the worksheet on the next page to keep track of your goals.

What about eAG?

A1C is usually reported as a percentage. But sometimes your test results may show a different number called estimated average glucose (eAG). Instead of a percentage, eAG is measured in milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) of blood — just like your daily blood sugar tests. That can make it easier for you to compare the results.



My ABC goals.

Take this worksheet with you to your next doctor visit. Ask what your goals should be — and how often you need to be tested.

A1C				My goal:
How often to be tested: _____				_____
Date				
Result				
Blood pressure				My goal:
How often to be tested: _____				_____
Date				
Result				
Cholesterol				My goal:
How often to be tested: _____				_____
Date				
Result				



Enjoy these top 10 diabetes superfoods!

Here's a list that's hard to top. It features foods so good for people with diabetes that the American Diabetes Association calls them superfoods.

Why all the buzz? Each is packed with nutrients — and has a low glycemic index. That describes a food's potential to raise blood sugar.

10 superfoods to try.

- 1. Beans.** They're super sources of protein.
- 2. Dark green, leafy vegetables.** Try spinach, collards or kale — and other low-calorie, low-carb greens.
- 3. Sweet potatoes.** Swap regular spuds for these. They're better for your blood sugar.
- 4. Berries.** Besides being juicy and sweet, they're high in antioxidants and fiber.
- 5. Tomatoes.** Any way you slice them, tomatoes provide plenty of iron and vitamins C and E.
- 6. Fish.** Choose varieties high in heart-friendly omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, sardines and herring.
- 7. Whole grains.** Opt for fiber-rich whole grains, such as rolled oats, quinoa and barley.
- 8. Nuts.** These are a good source of healthy fats. A small serving can help you feel full.
- 9. Milk and yogurt.** Calcium-rich foods help strengthen bones and teeth. Look for fat-free or low-fat options.
- 10. Citrus fruits.** Choose your favorites — oranges, grapefruits, lemons, limes — for fiber and good-for-you vitamin C.

Don't miss these recipes!

From savory salad to a tasty snack! Check out the recipes in this booklet, starting on [page 14](#).

Dining out with diabetes.

There's no magic formula for dining out with diabetes. But these steps can help you manage your condition — and enjoy yourself too.

Know your plan. Your meal plan helps you know what kinds of food to eat — as well as when and how much. Try to rely on it whether you're at home or in a restaurant.

Pack a snack. When dining out, it's not always possible to eat at your regular mealtime. To avoid a blood sugar dip, bring a snack, such as whole-wheat crackers or an apple. Then you'll have something to eat on schedule if there's an unexpected wait.

Choose heart-healthy items. People who have diabetes are at high risk of heart disease, so look for healthy, low-sodium foods on the menu. Lean meats, veggies and whole grains can be good choices.

Downsize portions. If you eat more carbohydrates than usual, your glucose levels may go higher than they should. To keep portions in check, share an entrée with a friend. Or ask for half to be boxed up as soon as your meal arrives.

Plan ahead for desserts. If you're having a treat, you may want to eat fewer carbs in your main course.

10 questions for your doctor.

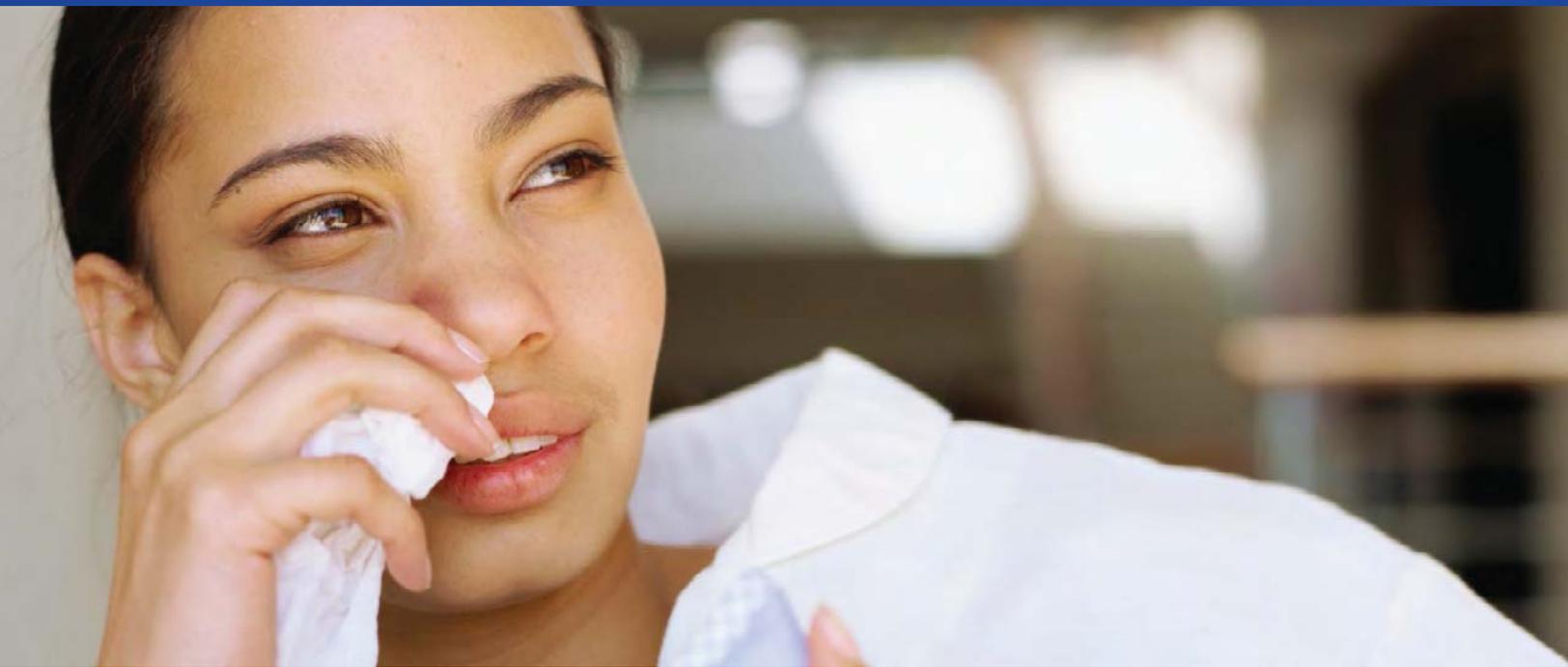
If you have diabetes, here are a few sample questions you might ask your doctor. Add your own — and take this list with you to your next doctor visit.

1. How often should I check my blood sugar?
2. How do I use a glucose meter — and what should my levels be?
3. What is an A1C test — and how often should I have one?
4. Do I need to follow a special eating and exercise plan?
5. Do I need to take medications? If so, how do I use them? Are there any side effects I should know about?
6. When should I have tests to check for kidney problems?
7. What should my blood pressure, cholesterol and weight goals be?
8. How often should I have my feet checked by a doctor? What can I do to help prevent foot problems?
9. How often should I see a dentist?
10. How often should I have an eye exam?

Add your own questions or notes: _____

Questions, questions.

[Browse more checklists](#) you can print and take to your next doctor visit.



Have a sick-day plan.

When you have diabetes, common illnesses can do more than make you feel lousy. They can make blood sugar levels harder to control.

You can't predict when you'll get hit with a cold, flu or stomach bug. But you can have a plan ready. Talk with your doctor about:



How often to check blood sugar. When you're sick, your body releases hormones to fight the illness. This can raise your blood sugar levels. So you may need to check them more often than usual.



How to take your medicines. You may need to take a different dose than usual when you're sick. Or your doctor may have you switch from pills to insulin.



What to eat. You should try to follow your food plan. If that's not possible, choose foods that are easy on the stomach, such as crackers, broth or applesauce. And be sure to drink plenty of fluids.



When to call your doctor. Make sure you know how to reach your health care team during off hours. You may need to call if:

- You're not better after a couple of days.
- You vomit more than once.
- You have diarrhea for more than six hours.
- Your blood sugar stays too high.

My daily diabetes record.

Checking your blood glucose levels every day helps you know if your diabetes care plan is working.

Copy this worksheet — and use it to track your blood glucose levels. Talk with your doctor about what your goals should be — and what to do if your levels are too low or too high. And then be sure to take your records with you to your doctor visits.

My targets:

Before meals: _____ to _____ mg/dL

2 hours after starting a meal: below _____ mg/dL

Dates: _____ to _____

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL
Medicine							
Lunch	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL
Medicine							
Dinner	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL
Medicine							
Other	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL	mg/dL
Medicine							
Notes							

If my levels are too low:

If my levels are too high:



My medicine record.

This list can help you, your doctor and your pharmacist. Be sure to include everything you take. That includes prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, supplements and herbal products.

Allergies: _____

What I take Name and active ingredients	Why I take it	How much I take	When and how I take it	What it looks like	Who prescribed it	Start/stop dates

Tips for travelers.

Diabetes requires daily care. But that doesn't have to stop you from traveling. Before you leave home, here are some important ways to prepare:



Check in for a checkup. See your doctor about four to six weeks before your trip. Be sure to ask for:

- A letter that lists your medications, supplies and allergies.
- Prescriptions for extra medication. You can fill them in case of an emergency.
- Immunizations — depending on where you're going.



Pack wisely. Keep these essentials with you at all times:

- Diabetes medicines and supplies. Bring twice as much as you need — in case you're delayed.
- A medical ID with emergency health information.
- Extra batteries for your glucose meter.
- Snacks, such as crackers, cheese, peanut butter and fruit.
- Your doctor's contact information.
- Your health plan ID card.*



Prepare for takeoff. If you'll be flying to another time zone, ask your doctor how to adjust the timing of your medicine.

To help avoid screening delays:

- Arrive at the airport early.
- Keep medications in their original packaging — then put them in a clear plastic bag.
- Let airport security know you're carrying diabetes supplies.
- Tell your flight attendant or someone you're traveling with that you have diabetes.

*Check your benefit plan to see what services may be covered while traveling.

Beet and orange salad with citrus vinaigrette

Ingredients

- 4 medium beets, stems trimmed to 1 inch
- 1 large navel orange
- 8 large butter, or Boston, lettuce leaves
- 1 to 2 tablespoons diced red onion
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Directions

1. Set a steamer insert into a large, deep saucepan. Pour in cold water to a depth of 2 inches, making sure it does not touch the bottom of the steamer. Arrange beets in one layer. Cover tightly — and set pot over high heat. Bring to a boil. Then reduce heat and simmer for about 45 minutes — or until a knife meets only slight resistance when inserted into the center. Transfer beets to a plate. Set aside until cool enough to handle.
2. To avoid stains, lay a sheet of plastic wrap over your work surface — and slip your hands into plastic sandwich bags. Cut tops and root tips off beets. Pull and slide off the skins. Cut each beet crosswise into 6 slices.
3. Grate 2 teaspoons zest from orange. Set aside. Cut off top and bottom of orange. Then remove peel. Cut orange crosswise into 8 slices.
4. To assemble, line 4 salad plates with lettuce. On each plate, arrange 6 beet slices and 2 orange slices on top of the lettuce. Sprinkle with 1/4 of onion.
5. For the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together orange and lemon juices, vinegar, salt and pepper until salt dissolves. Whisk in oil — and add zest. Spoon over salad. Serve immediately.



Nutrition information:

Makes 4 servings. Amount per serving: 90 calories, 4g total fat (less than 1g saturated fat), 14g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 3g dietary fiber, 360mg sodium.

Black bean and artichoke simmer

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup green onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) stewed Italian-style tomatoes
- 1 can (15 ounces) reduced-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) artichoke hearts, drained and quartered

Directions

1. In a large sauté pan, heat olive oil. Add green onions. Cook on medium-high heat, stirring often, about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in garlic and canned tomatoes. Cook an additional 3 minutes. Add black beans, stirring to mix well. Continue to cook for 5 more minutes.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add artichoke hearts. Cover. Simmer 2 minutes. Serve.



Nutrition information:

Makes 9 servings. Amount per serving: 90 calories, 1.5g total fat (0g saturated fat), 15g carbohydrates, 4g protein, 4g dietary fiber, 420mg sodium.

Salmon cakes with tangy mustard-dill sauce

Ingredients

1/4 cup dried whole-wheat breadcrumbs	1/4 cup chopped scallions, white and green
2 large eggs	1 can (15 ounces) wild salmon (with skin, hard backbones and cartilage removed)
3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise, divided	Nonstick cooking spray
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice	2 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt
1 teaspoon paprika	1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard
Cayenne pepper (optional)	2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
1/3 cup chopped leaves of flat-leaf parsley	Freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. In a mixing bowl, combine breadcrumbs, eggs, 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise, lemon juice, paprika and a dash of cayenne pepper (if using) until well-blended.
2. Mix in parsley and scallions. Add fish to breadcrumb mixture, using a fork to break it up well. With your hands, mix ingredients together until well-combined, about 1 minute, being careful not to overwork the mixture.
3. Form salmon mixture into 4 patties, pressing firmly. Coat a skillet with cooking spray. Set it over medium-high heat. Cook salmon cakes until browned on the bottom, about 5 minutes. Turn and brown the other side, about 4 minutes, reducing heat if necessary.
4. For the mustard sauce, in small bowl, combine the remaining mayonnaise, yogurt, mustard and dill until well-blended. Season to taste with pepper.
5. Serve each hot salmon cake accompanied by a dollop of mustard sauce.



Nutrition information:

Makes 4 servings. Amount per serving: 249 calories, 12g total fat (3g saturated fat), 8g carbohydrates, 26g protein, 1g dietary fiber, 740mg sodium.

Popcorn trail mix

Ingredients*

- 2 cups air-popped popcorn
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened whole-grain oat dry cereal
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 3 tablespoons dried blueberries
- 3 tablespoons dried cranberries
- 3 tablespoons dry-roasted almonds, coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped dried pineapple
- 2 tablespoons roasted pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons dry-roasted sunflower seeds

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.



Nutrition information:

Makes 10 servings of 1/2 cup each. Amount per serving: 91 calories, 3g total fat (less than 1g saturated fat), 15g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 37mg sodium.

*The foods included here are not intended for small children because they may cause choking.
Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

More resources for you.



Read more:

- [Learn about diabetes](#)
- [Take control of your care](#)



Learn more:

- [Take a free online course](#)
- [Watch an online seminar](#)



Browse checklists:

- [Diabetes: Questions for your doctor](#)
- [Dining out with diabetes: Questions for your doctor](#)
- [Traveling with diabetes: Questions for your doctor](#)