

Managing the ABCs of Diabetes

When living with diabetes, know the ABC plan to lower your risk of heart disease.

A for the A1C test

The **A1C test** shows your average blood sugar level over the past 3 months. The A1C goal for many people with diabetes is below 7%. Ask your health care team what your goal should be.



- The A1C test is short for hemoglobin A1C.
- It lets you know how well you are managing your blood sugar levels, reducing risk of damage to your body.
- Managing your blood sugar levels will help prevent complications.
- Get this test at least twice a year.
- **Number to aim for: below 7%**

Date of my A1C test				
My number				

B for Blood pressure

The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 130/80 mmHg. Ask your health care team what your goal should be:



- The higher your blood pressure, the harder your heart has to work.
- Get your blood pressure measured at every doctor's visit.
- **Work with your health care team to set a blood pressure goal that is right for you.**

Date checked				
My number				

C for Cholesterol

Too much bad cholesterol or low density lipoprotein (LDL) can cause a higher risk for heart attack or stroke. High density lipoprotein (HDL) or "good" cholesterol helps remove the "bad" cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask your health care team what your cholesterol goal should be:



- Maintain a normal cholesterol level (under 200 mg/dL).
- HDL should be 40mg/dL or higher for men and 50mg/dL or higher for women.
- Triglyceride level should be 150 mg/dL or lower.
- LDL or "bad" cholesterol builds up forming plaque that can clog your arteries.
- LDL should be under 70 mg/dL.
- **Get your cholesterol tested at least once per year.**

Date checked				
My total cholesterol number				
My HDL number				
My LDL number				
My triglyceride number				

(over)

Tips to prevent or manage your diabetes



Get active:

- If you are not active now, ask your health care team about the amount of physical activity that is right for you.
- Aim to be active for at least 10 minutes at a time and increase steps daily.
- Pick an activity that you enjoy and gradually increase to 150 minutes per week.
- Try to incorporate resistance exercises like weights or bands at least 2 days per week.



Follow a healthy meal plan:

- Use my plate (myplate.gov) and eat smaller portions.
- Eat whole foods and less processed foods. Choose whole grains, non-starchy vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy.

- Eat foods that are lower in sodium, saturated fat, trans fat and sugar.
- Choose lean sources of protein. Trim the fat off of meat and remove skin off of chicken.
- Bake, broil, boil or grill instead of frying.
- Avoid lard and butter. Cut down on high fat foods such as sausage and bacon.
- Drink water or calorie-free beverages.



If you smoke or use tobacco products, **STOP**:

- Both smoking and diabetes narrow blood vessels.
- Narrowed blood vessels cause your heart to have to work harder. E-cigarettes aren't a safe option either.
- Ask your doctor, family or friends to help you quit smoking.

If you already have diabetes, add these steps to control your diabetes:

- Check your blood sugar levels as the doctor instructs you.
- Take medicines as the doctor tells you, even when you feel fine.
- Check your feet every day for cuts, bruises, red areas or swelling.
- Brush your teeth and use dental floss every day.
- See your eye doctor once a year or more often if you have eye problems.
- Find support to help you handle stress.

Be sure to ask your doctor:

1. What are my ABC numbers?
2. What should my ABC numbers be?
3. What do I need to do to reach healthy ABC numbers?

To learn more about how to find a PCP to help manage your diabetes, visit memorialhermann.org/primary-care

To register for a Diabetes Support Group, please call [713.222.CARE](tel:713.222.CARE) (2273).

For more information on diabetes or to find the Memorial Hermann location closest to you, visit: memorialhermann.org/diabetes