

# Self-Care

## for Diabetic and Prediabetic Patients



Managing diabetes symptoms on a daily basis can be complicated and challenging. Talk to your provider to establish small, achievable goals for a self-care routine, and use the worksheet on Page 2 to keep track of your strategies each day of the week.

## Self-Care Strategies<sup>1</sup>

### Eat healthy meals

Being diabetic doesn't mean you have to cut out the foods you enjoy; it's about finding a balance that works for you. Read food labels to understand which foods are high in sugar and talk to your health care provider to develop a meal plan. Drink plenty of water, as dehydration can make you feel sick and vulnerable to complications.

### Be physically active

Exercising regularly in small doses helps to improve your heart health, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and relieve stress. Physical activity can include any type of movement, whether it's taking the stairs, practicing yoga or exercising in a chair.

### Monitor glucose

It's important to check your blood sugar outside of a health care exam because it can help you decide how to eat or when to exercise each day. For Type 1 and Type 2 diabetics, the target glucose level range before a meal is 70 – 130 mg/dL. At least two hours after a meal, the target range is <180 mg/dL.<sup>2</sup>

### Use problem-solving skills

It's easy to forget your routine when you're in an unexpected situation. Think ahead about activities that might require you to change your established rituals. For example, if you're traveling, bring some extra snacks. If you're alone, call a family member or caregiver who could help.

### Comply with medications

Most diabetics take several medications, so it can be difficult to remember what to take each day. Sticking to your medications is necessary to prevent long-term complications.

### Develop healthy coping skills

It's completely natural to feel stressed or confused about diabetes management. It's important to find activities that help keep you calm when unexpected things happen, like reading a book, meditating or calling a friend.

### Practice risk-reduction behaviors

Having diabetes can put you at risk for other conditions, so you should ask your provider about complications. Try to listen to your body's symptoms. Protect your feet from cuts and scrapes and visit specialists throughout the year.

## Tests and Exams<sup>3</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, diabetes patients should have a few exams each year to test for new symptoms or complications:

**Every 3 months:** Routine diabetes exam, foot exam, Hemoglobin A1C test for glucose

**Every 6 months:** Dental exam

**Every 12 months:** Eye exam, urine test, cholesterol test

#### Sources:

1. [jdmdonline.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/2251-6581-12-14](http://jdmdonline.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/2251-6581-12-14)
2. [www.joslin.org/info/Goals-for-Blood-Glucose-Control.html](http://www.joslin.org/info/Goals-for-Blood-Glucose-Control.html)
3. [medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000082.htm](http://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000082.htm)

# Sunday

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Self-Care Worksheet for Diabetic and Prediabetic Patients

### What I Ate

Ex: Grilled chicken, fruits and veggies

### How Much I Slept

Ex: 6-8 hours per night

### What I Drank

Ex: Water, juice, coffee

### Medication I Took

Ex: Insulin, aspirin, blood pressure medication

### How Much I Exercised

Ex: Weekly total: 30 minutes

### How I Feel Today

Ex: Pain, headaches, etc.

### How My Feet Look

Ex: Look for cuts or bruises, toenails are trimmed.

### Today's Blood Sugars

Ex: Before meal: 70 - 130 mg/dL

### How I Relieved Stress

Ex: Yoga, exercise, meditation

### Questions for My Provider

Ex: Is running safe for me?

# Monday

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# Tuesday

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# Wednesday

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# Thursday

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Ex: Look for cuts or bruises, toenails are trimmed.

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# Friday

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### How I Feel Today

Ex: Pain, headaches, etc.

### How My Feet Look

Ex: Look for cuts or bruises, toenails are trimmed.

### Today's Blood Sugars

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### How I Relieved Stress

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### Questions for My Provider

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# Saturday

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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