

## ***You have just learned that you have diabetes.***

While this might be overwhelming for you, the good news is that diabetes can be controlled and complications can be prevented. Once you know how to keep yourself healthy while living with diabetes, making a commitment to do that each and every day becomes less of a challenge.

This packet has been created to help you get on the right path to control your diabetes. It is your pathway for the year. The packet includes checklists for important milestones – what you should know and what you should be doing at specific times throughout the first year. We encourage you to pick a prominent place to post your current checklist, updating it with each new one as you complete the objectives listed.

As you progress through these milestones over the course of a year, it is also essential to keep your daily care in mind. Post a daily reminder in your bathroom or kitchen, near your computer, or inside your planner to help you remember the importance of daily care in your diabetes management. Sample daily reminders are included in your packet.

If you have questions or feel you need more information or support, please contact us:

**Member Health Improvement Department**  
**(855) 644-4764 (toll free) or [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)**

# Your First Month

First, you need to understand what diabetes is and how it affects your body.

- Share your diagnosis** with those close to you for support and help with making changes.
- If you haven't already done so, sign up for a **Diabetes Management class**. Contact the **Member Health Improvement Department** toll-free at **(855) 644-4764** or **health@hpmg.com** for help finding a class near you. You are encouraged to bring a support person.
- Check with your **health plan** to find out about their programs or services for members with diabetes. Often, they can help you obtain medical equipment you may need. See the enclosed flier for more information on health plan programs.
- Make sure you understand how to use your **blood glucose monitor** and know how often you should be checking your blood sugar levels. You should record **daily** blood sugar readings in order to share them with your physician at your check-ups.
- If you feel you need additional help with **learning to use your equipment**, and are a Hill Physicians member with diabetes, you are eligible to see a certified diabetes educator for one-on-one education. Contact **Member Health Improvement** (see below) for more information.
- Work towards drinking more **water**. Try adding lemon or mix in sugar-free flavors to ease into drinking more. If you drink soda, switch to diet, or try other sugar-free drinks. Try to avoid regular sodas, sweets, and other "junk food." Check out our **Quick Food Tips** handout for more suggestions for improving your diet.
- Add **physical activity** to your daily routine. Almost any kind of exercise can help lower your blood sugar. Start by adding **5-10 minutes** of exercise and work your way up to approximately 30 minutes every day. Walking is one of the easiest exercises to incorporate. Be sure to check with your doctor first and make sure you have appropriate footwear.
- Plan for success**. While it might seem like you need to make a lot of changes at once, making small changes and setting reachable goals can help you stick with these life changes for the long run. Use our Action Plan to learn how to create a plan for success.
- Congratulations! You have made it through your first month!** If you've checked all the boxes above you are making progress toward a lifetime of healthy diabetes control. Move ahead by replacing this checklist with the next one.  
Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to download the Months 2-3 checklist.

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## Months 2-3

You have made a good start with managing your diabetes. By now, you should know how to use your blood glucose monitor and you should have had your first hemoglobin **A1c lab test**.

- If you haven't had your first **A1c (A-one-C) test**, talk to your doctor. The A1c – short for hemoglobin A1c – measures your blood glucose (sugar) over the last three months.
- To learn more about diabetes, refer to ***ABCs of Diabetes: Learn Them, Lower Them***.
- Make an appointment to have a **diabetic eye exam** with an optometrist or ophthalmologist. This differs from a regular exam you might have for eyeglasses because your eyes will be dilated. If you don't have an optometrist or ophthalmologist, now is the time to find one. Contact your health plan for information on your vision coverage or ask your physician for a recommendation. When you schedule the appointment, be sure to let the doctor know that you have been diagnosed with diabetes. Plan on an annual dilated eye exam from now on.
- Dental exams** are recommended twice a year for routine cleanings and check-ups. Now is the time to go if you haven't been seen within the last six months.
- If you are a woman of childbearing age and are considering pregnancy, make an appointment with your **primary care physician** or an **Ob-Gyn** to discuss preconception planning. (Some family practice doctors also provide obstetric and gynecologic care.) Use our physician directory at [www.HillPhysicians.com/Directory](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Directory) to find an Ob-Gyn if you do not have one. Be sure to select "Obstetrics & Gynecology" from the Specialist (not Primary Care Physician) pull-down menu.
- It's time to quit smoking.** Either on your own, or with the help of your physician, consider developing a plan for cutting back and eventually quitting. Visit our Tobacco Cessation Health Information Center at [www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/QuitNow) or contact Member Health Improvement for resources to help you quit.
- Have you taken a **Diabetes Management** class yet? If you haven't, contact Member Health Improvement for help finding a class.
- How are you doing with changes related to eating, staying active, or testing your blood sugar? Using an **action plan** can help you try out small changes and review your progress toward your goal.
- Congratulations!** You're making progress toward a lifetime of healthy diabetes control. Move ahead by replacing this checklist with the next one. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to download the Months 4-6 checklist.

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## Months 4-6

By this time, you have hopefully attended a **Diabetes Management** class and are feeling comfortable with your knowledge of diabetes and how to manage it. Meal planning and exercise should be incorporated into your lifestyle as key factors in keeping your blood sugar under control. And regular visits to your physician should be helping to keep you on track.

- At this point, it may be helpful to evaluate the **lifestyle changes** you have made. Have you set goals for yourself? Have you met them? If you have, great job! Take the time to set some new goals you would like to achieve. If you have not met your goals, take a minute to reassess, and decide if there are more reasonable or realistic goals you could achieve. Using an **action plan** can help you try out small changes and review your progress toward your goal.
- Have you considered joining a **support group for people with diabetes**? Or perhaps you would like to become involved with an organization that either offers education on diabetes, raises awareness about the disease, or holds special events benefiting their cause. Regardless of your specific interest, being involved with these types of resources is a great way to stay committed to keeping yourself healthy. Check out our **Diabetes Resource List** to get started.
- Take time to acknowledge** your successes, as well as the support of your family and friends who have been helpful since your diagnosis. Remember that they also may have made sacrifices and lifestyles changes, in order to help you be successful.
- Congratulations!** You're making progress toward a lifetime of healthy diabetes control. Move ahead by replacing this checklist with the next one.  
Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to download the Months 7-9 checklist.

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## Months 7-9

Your first year of living with diabetes is half over and you are making great progress! Now would be a good time to evaluate your progress with exams and lab work.

- By now, you should have had your **second A1c lab test**. If this test has not been completed, contact your physician to schedule this test. Or, if you don't know what your A1c was after your last test, it's also a good idea to call your doctor to find out.
- Reminders:** Did you see your eye doctor yet? Your dentist? If you have not, schedule these important appointments today!
- Continue assessing and setting goals** regarding meal planning and exercise and be sure to reward yourself when you reach them! For help setting realistic goals and sticking with them, use an **action plan**.
- How's your mood?** Depression can affect people with any type of chronic illness, including diabetes. If you are sleeping too much or too little, eating too much or too little, or simply not enjoying the things that once gave you pleasure, clinical depression might be the cause. The good news is that moderate depression is fairly easy to treat. Call your health plan's behavioral health number on your health plan card to schedule an appointment with a therapist. To learn more about depression, go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Depression](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Depression) or **call Member Health Improvement at (855) 644-4764** for information.
- Congratulations** on your continued progress toward a lifetime of healthy diabetes control! Move ahead by replacing this checklist with the next one. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to download the Months 10-12 checklist.

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## Months 10-12

**Congratulations!** You have made it through your first year of living well with diabetes.

The last step in this **first year plan** is to make an appointment to see your physician for your yearly exam. At this visit, be sure to remember to:

- Write down your questions or concerns and bring them to your appointment.
- Have your weight and blood pressure checked.
- Have your feet examined – take your shoes and socks off at every visit as a reminder.
- Review your blood sugar records with your doctor.
- Ask your doctor about aspirin therapy.
- Get any immunizations that may be due, such as pneumovax and a flu shot during the flu season. Visit our **Preventive Guidelines** at [www.hillphysicians.com/Prevention](http://www.hillphysicians.com/Prevention) to learn more about adult immunizations you might need.
- When scheduling your appointment, request the following lab tests: hemoglobin A1c, a fasting lipid panel (total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, LDL) and a microalbumin test of your urine. Complete these labs a week or two before your appointment, if possible.

To continue on the successful path you have started down with leading an active, healthy lifestyle with diabetes, periodically evaluate your progress using your **action plan** and a **diabetes self-care checklist**. Discuss your progress or questions with your doctor at your next annual exam.

**We welcome your comments.** Please contact Member Health Improvement to let us know if these materials were helpful and to suggest any additional materials or services that would be helpful.

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## Daily Reminders

Cut and post these daily reminders in your bathroom or kitchen – or even near your computer or daily planner – to help you remember the importance of daily care in your diabetes management. Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to print more daily reminders.

### REMINDERS

- Brush your teeth twice a day.
- Floss.
- Check your feet.
- Exercise.
- Check your blood sugar levels as directed by your physician.
- Take medications as prescribed.

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## Quick Food Tips for People with Diabetes

- Eat small, frequent meals (every three hours).
- Protein is essential at each meal and snack.
- Eat more vegetables than fruits.
- Substitute whole grain products for white flour products.



- Drink water, non-caloric beverages or diet sodas – limit consumption of juices or regular sodas.
- Desserts are acceptable if eaten with a meal.
- Refrain from fruits or sweets in between meals.
- Exercise is the best way to immediately reduce high blood sugar.

For help with meal planning, browse our collection of Diabetes-friendly recipes at:  
[www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Recipes)

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# Testing your blood sugar at home

Testing your blood sugar daily is an important part of managing your diabetes. The following tips can help you get the best results from your testing.

## Have the following supplies for testing your blood sugar at home:

- Blood sugar meter** (or blood glucose meter)
- Testing strips** designed for use with your meter
- Sugar-Control Solution** designed for use with your meter
- Lancets** (short needles specifically made for sticking your fingers)
- A **lancing device**, which holds, positions and controls how deep the lancet goes into your skin
- Clean cotton balls** or tissue to stop your finger from bleeding

## Now you are ready to test your blood sugar

- Wash your **hands** with warm soapy water and dry them well.
- Put a **clean needle** (lancet) in the lancet device.
- Hang your hand **below your waist** for a minute or so – this will cause the blood to pool into your finger, making it easier to get enough blood to perform your test.
- Get your blood sugar meter ready with a test strip and **follow the directions for use**.
- Use the **lancet device** to stick the side of your fingertip - using the side will be less painful as there are fewer nerve endings than on the fingertips.
- If you have trouble getting a drop of blood large enough to cover the test area of the strip, hang your hand down again for a few seconds, then **squeeze your finger** starting closest to your hand and moving towards the end of your finger.
- Put a **drop of blood** on the correct spot of the test strip and make sure it covers the area well.
- Using a clean cotton ball or tissue, **apply pressure** to the puncture site to stop the bleeding.
- Follow the directions** for your blood sugar meter to get your results.
- Record your results in your **blood sugar testing diary**.

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## Troubleshooting Tips for Self-Monitoring of Blood Glucose (SMBG)

Sometimes getting a good blood sample or using your home glucose meter is difficult. The following tips may help you. If you continue to have problems, check with your physician or contact the Member Health Improvement Department.

- If you are using a lancing device, most products give you the option of changing the **depth of penetration**, so you can get enough blood without discomfort.
- After awhile, the **spring in the lancing device weakens** and it may become harder to draw blood. If your lancing device came with your meter, check with the manufacturer for a replacement. If a replacement is not possible, it may be time for a new one.
- Avoid drawing blood from your toes** as infection and decreased blood flow to the feet are concerns for diabetics.
- If you find your fingers are **bruising** from fingersticks, the lancet may be penetrating too deeply. Experiment with your lancing device to find a setting that is comfortable, but still warrants enough blood for testing.
- Be sure to **allow your blood to clot** following the fingerstick. After putting the blood sample on the strip, firmly hold a tissue to the puncture site while you are waiting for your results. If you are taking **Coumadin** or another anticoagulant or antiplatelet drugs, you will need to firmly hold the site for at least 30 seconds.
- Use **lotion or skin creams** to keep the skin on your fingers from cracking.
- There are meters that come with lancing devices that can draw blood from other parts of the body **if fingertips are not an option**. Check with your health plan to see if they cover these meters.

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## ABCs of Diabetes: *Learn Them, Lower Them.*

If you have diabetes, take action now to lower your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Ask your health care team these lifesaving questions.

- What are my diabetes ABCs?
  - **A1C (blood glucose average)**
  - **Blood pressure**
  - **Cholesterol numbers**
- What are my treatment goals?
- What do I need to do to reach and maintain my goals?

Now, **get started** lowering your risk of heart attack and stroke for a longer, healthier life.

- Get **physical** activity every day.
- Eat **less fat and salt**.
- Eat more **fiber** – choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans.
- Stay at a **healthy weight**.
- Stop smoking** – ask your health care team for help.
- Take **medicines as prescribed**.
- Ask your doctor about taking **aspirin**.
- Ask others to **help** you manage your diabetes.

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# Blood Tests to Help You Manage Your Diabetes

## A1C and self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG)

There are two blood tests that can help you manage your diabetes:

- A1C test:** reflects your glucose (or blood sugar) control. Testing your A1C level every 3 months is the best way for you and your doctor to understand how well your glucose levels are controlled over a 3-month time span. Your A1C goal will be determined by your doctor, but it is usually recommended to keep it below 8%.
- SMBG (Self-monitoring blood glucose) test:** reflects your blood sugar levels when tested with a blood glucose monitor on a more frequent basis. The results from regular testing can help you make appropriate adjustments to your medicine, diet and/or level of physical activity, in order to improve your levels. Every person with diabetes should have a blood glucose monitor and know how to use it. Follow our suggestions for the frequency and timing of your SMBG testing, as well as the tips for how to use the results to improve your glucose control.

## How often should I do SMBG testing?

Your family doctor will recommend how often you should test. Testing times are based on the kind of medicine you take and on how well your sugar levels are controlled. Common frequencies are listed below.

- If you have **type 1 diabetes**, and are taking insulin, test 3 or 4 times a day.
- If you have **type 2 diabetes**, and are taking insulin and diabetes pills, test 3 or 4 times per day.
- If you are taking **diabetes pills**, and have not achieved your **target A1c**, test 2 to 4 times a day.
- If you are taking **diabetes pills only**, or you are controlling your diabetes well with diet and exercise only, ask your doctor how often you should test.

## What time of day should I test?

Recommendations for the best time of day to test your blood sugar depend on your medicine, mealtimes and sugar control. Use the chart on the next page to note your doctor's recommendation for checking. Your doctor may also suggest different goals, depending on your situation.

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# Self-Monitoring Blood Glucose Testing

Recommendations for the best time of day to test your blood sugar depend on your medicine, mealtimes and sugar control. Use the chart below to note your doctor's recommendation for checking. Your doctor may also suggest different goals, depending on your situation. You may want to make a copy of this chart to use on a weekly basis.

Go to [www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.HillPhysicians.com/Diabetes) to print additional copies of this chart.

Time to Test:	Fasting, Before Breakfast	1-2 Hours After Breakfast	Before Lunch	1-2 Hours After Lunch	Before Dinner	1-2 Hours After Dinner	Bedtime	3 A.M.
<b>Target Goal Ranges*</b>	80-120	< 180	80-120	< 180	80-120	< 180	100-140	70-110
<b>Doctor's Recommendation</b>								
<b>Monday</b>								
<b>Tuesday</b>								
<b>Wednesday</b>								
<b>Thursday</b>								
<b>Friday</b>								
<b>Saturday</b>								
<b>Sunday</b>								

\*Blood glucose values are measured from blood samples obtained from the finger or other sites, as read on your blood glucose monitor. The target goals are based on recommendations from a panel of medical experts. Talk to your doctor about what changes to make if your blood sugar levels are not within this range. Information obtained from familydoctor.org. *Updated January 2010.*

# Creating an Action Plan for Change

“I want to lose weight to improve my health.”  
“I’d like to reduce my stress.”  
“I’m going make better eating choices.”  
“I’m going to be more physically active.”

We all have changes we’d like to make. Goals around health, relationships, and career are common but your goal could be just about anything. Coming up with goals isn’t hard, the difficulty is obtaining them. In order to make a successful, lasting change, you’ll need effort, persistence, and a good plan.

**Start by clarifying your goal.** What, exactly, do you want to accomplish? How will you know you’ve accomplished it?

**How important is it to you?** Choose a goal because it is important to *you*, not just because someone else wants it for you. Consider how important this goal is to you on a scale from 1 to 10. If below 7, think about adjusting your goal to something that is more meaningful to you.

**Make your plan specific and take small, measurable steps.** When, where, or how will you work toward the goal? Most goals can be broken down into a series of small steps. Start with the first small step to make your goal more manageable. You’ll move to the next step after you’ve achieved success with the one before it.

**Be prepared for setbacks.** Most of us don’t achieve our goals on the first try. Give yourself the mindset of a realistic optimist. Stay positive and confident that you’ll reach your goal in the end, but anticipate mistakes, failures, and setbacks along the way. Brainstorm any barriers that might come between you and success. Decide now how you’ll deal with them if they come up.

**Enlist a support person.** Who will you tell about your goal? Discussing your plan with another person can help solidify your commitment to following through – and you’ll have someone to help you celebrate your success.

**Rate your confidence.** On a scale from 1 to 10, how confident are you that you can achieve your goal? If your confidence is below 7, adjust your plan to be more realistic for you right now.

**Review your progress.** At each step, take a moment to evaluate how you’re doing. If you’re not making the progress you’d like, ask why. Did you take on too much? Is there something else in your life that’s interfering? Here’s where the persistence comes in: modify your plan and start again. In time, you’ll get there.

**Use the Action Plan form on the following page for help with creating a plan for lasting change. Contact Member Health Improvement if you need help getting started.**

**Member Health Improvement Department**  
**(855) 644-4764 (toll free) or [health@hpmg.com](mailto:health@hpmg.com)**

# My Action Plan

To improve my health I will:

## 1. Choose one of the activities below:



\_\_\_\_\_ Work on something that's bothering me:

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_ Stay more physically active!



\_\_\_\_\_ Use my medications/ medical equipment.



\_\_\_\_\_ Improve my food choices.



\_\_\_\_\_ Reduce my stress.



\_\_\_\_\_ Cut down on smoking.

## 2. Chosen activity (what): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 3. On a scale from 1 to 10, how important is this to you? \_\_\_\_\_



10 VERY IMPORTANT

5 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

1 NOT VERY IMPORTANT

## 4. When/where/how often: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Possible challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Plan to overcome challenges? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Support person(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. On a scale from 1 to 10, what is your confidence level? \_\_\_\_\_



10 VERY SURE

5 SOMEWHAT SURE

1 NOT SURE AT ALL

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Support Person's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Need extra copies of this form? Go to [www.hillphysicians.com/Diabetes](http://www.hillphysicians.com/Diabetes) to print or download a copy.

## Resources

American Diabetes Association  
(800) 342-2383  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases  
National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse  
(800) 860-8747  
[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

American Heart Association  
(800) AHA-USA1  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
(301) 592-8573  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
(877) 232-4636  
[www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)

Diabetes Self-Management  
(800) 234-0923  
[www.diabetesselfmanagement.com](http://www.diabetesselfmanagement.com)

MedicAlert  
(888) 633-4298  
[www.medicalert.org](http://www.medicalert.org)

**Looking for more resources for help with your diabetes? Don't forget to check with your health plan!**

Aetna – Disease Program  
(866) 269-4500  
[www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com)

Cigna – Well Aware for Better Health  
(602) 371-2400  
[www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com)

Blue Cross – Health Management Corp.  
(800) 522-5560  
[www.anthem.com/ca](http://www.anthem.com/ca)

Health Net – Decision Power  
(800) 893-5597  
[www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com)

Blue Shield – Diabetes Program  
(866) 954-4567  
[www.blueshieldca.com](http://www.blueshieldca.com)

PacifiCare – Taking Charge of Diabetes  
(877) 840-4085  
[www.pacificare.com](http://www.pacificare.com)