

# Tips to help you stay healthy with diabetes.

## Know your ABC's.

Know your ABC's and blood glucose targets. Learn how and when to test your blood glucose, and how to use the results to manage your diabetes.

- A. A1C measures your average blood glucose level over the past three months.
- B. High blood pressure (BP) makes your heart work too hard.
- C. LDL, or bad cholesterol, builds up and clogs your arteries. HDL, or good cholesterol, helps remove cholesterol from your blood vessels.

Use this chart to help you manage your diabetes.

TEST	Goal*	Check How Often?
A1C	below 7	At least twice a year
BP	130/80	Each doctor's visit
Cholesterol	LDL below 100 HDL above 40	At least once a year

\*For most people with diabetes

## Manage your diabetes.

- Ask for a diabetes meal plan to help you choose healthy foods.
- Get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity, such as brisk walking, on most days of the week.
- Seek help if you feel down. You may feel better if you talk with a mental health counselor, friend, or support group.
- Stop smoking—seek help to quit.
- Take your medicines even when you feel good.
- Check your feet every day. Call your healthcare team if a cut, sore, blister, or bruise on your feet or toes does not begin to heal after one day.
- Brush your teeth and floss every day to avoid problems with your mouth, teeth, or gums.
- Report any changes in your eyesight to your doctor. See your eye doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:
  - You see little black lines or spots that won't go away.
  - You have a sudden change in how clearly you see.
  - Your eyes take longer than usual adjusting to darkness.

## Get regular care.

Avoid problems by seeing your healthcare team to:

- Get your ABC tests, have your blood pressure, weight, and feet checked, and get a yearly flu shot.
- Obtain a dental exam from your oral health professional at least twice a year.
- Receive an annual dilated eye exam from your VSP® Vision Care doctor. This is the best way to identify problems early and protect yourself against diabetes-related vision loss.

Control your diabetes for life. For more information about the National Diabetes Education Program, visit [yourdiabetesinfo.org](http://yourdiabetesinfo.org), or call **1.800.438.5383**.

The National Diabetes Education Program is a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# Are you at risk for heart disease?

## Heart Healthy Tips

Research shows that several factors that can indicate or lead to heart damage are also harmful to the eyes. What risk factors can you modify, treat, or control by changing your lifestyle or taking medicine?

- **Stop smoking** – Smokers' risk of developing coronary heart disease is two to four times that of nonsmokers. Cigarette smoking is a powerful independent risk factor for sudden cardiac death in patients with coronary heart disease; smokers have about twice the risk of nonsmokers.
- **Reduce cholesterol** – As blood cholesterol rises, so does the risk of coronary heart disease. When other risk factors (such as high blood pressure and tobacco smoke) are present, this risk increases even more. A person's cholesterol level is also affected by age, sex, heredity, and diet.
- **Reduce blood pressure** – High blood pressure increases the heart's workload, causing the heart to thicken and become stiffer.
- **Increase physical activity** – An inactive lifestyle is a risk factor for coronary heart disease. Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease.
- **Lose those extra pounds** – People who have excess body fat—especially if a lot of it is at the waist—are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart's work. It also raises blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and triglyceride levels, and lowers HDL "good" cholesterol levels.
- **Control blood sugar** – Diabetes seriously increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Even when glucose (blood sugar) levels are under control, diabetes increases the risk of heart disease and stroke; the risks are even greater if blood sugar isn't well controlled.
- **Reduce stress** – Individual responses to stress may lead to heart disease and stroke.
- **Reduce alcohol consumption** — Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure, and lead to stroke.

During a comprehensive eye exam, your VSP® doctor checks for many subtle changes in the retina resulting from high blood pressure. These changes may include narrowing of the small blood vessels in the retina, pressure on veins from the arteries, and the development of flame-shaped hemorrhages, among other complications.

VSP eye doctors who detect these changes will work with your primary care doctor to ensure you receive appropriate and timely treatment.

Be smart about your heart. Learn more about the National Diabetes Education Program, visit [yourdiabetesinfo.org](http://yourdiabetesinfo.org), or call 1.800.438.5383.

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Source: This information has been adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Web site.

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