

Dealing with a Diabetes Diagnosis as an Older Adult



Almost 10.5 million adults aged 60 and older in the United States have diabetes. Diabetes is serious but older adults can learn to manage it and avoid or delay serious complications, and live longer, healthier lives.

One way to help prevent the complications is to manage the **ABCs of diabetes**:

- **A** is for the A1C test. It measures your average blood glucose level over the past 3 months.
- **B** is for blood pressure. High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard.
- **C** is for cholesterol. Bad cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries.

Learn to make small changes to manage your diabetes through healthy eating and safely increasing your physical activity.

- Choose healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, dry peas or beans, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat milk products.
- If you can't cook for yourself, find out about a community program in your area that serves or delivers meals. Call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 for information on a program nearest you.
- Check with your health care professional before you start a physical activity program.
- Set small physical activity goals until you reach at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- If allowed, work toward doing strength exercises (using gravity, weights, or exercise bands) on two or three days a week.

Understand your Medicare benefits.

- Medicare pays for part of the cost of diabetes equipment and supplies, including blood glucose meters, test strips, and lancets, diabetes self-management training (helps you learn how to manage diabetes) and medical nutrition therapy services (helps you learn which foods are best to eat and how much food is right for you).
- Medicare Part B helps pay for the A1C test, a dilated eye exam to check for diabetic eye diseases, glaucoma screening, flu and pneumococcal pneumonia shots, and foot care if you have nerve damage in either foot due to diabetes.
- Medicare Part D covers the cost of prescription drugs.

Call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov for more information. For more information about managing diabetes as an older adult, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-888-693-6337 or www.YourDiabetesInfo.org to order your free copy of *The Power to Control Diabetes Is in Your Hands* and *4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes. For Life*. Free resources, like *Young At Heart: Tips for Older Adults*, that can help older adults with weight control and physical activity can be obtained from the Weight-control Information Network at 1-877-946-4627.