

# Diabetes Resources – Calgary Zone

Providers at the Diabetes Centre Calgary want to help you self-manage your diabetes. This handout lists resources to help. Please call Health Link at 811 to learn of more resources.

## What you need to know:

Diabetes occurs when the body can't control blood sugar (glucose) levels. Blood sugar levels that are too high, for too long, can damage the small and big blood vessels they travel through. This can harm eyes, heart, brain (stroke), nerves, kidneys, and feet. There are steps you can take that may prevent or reduce these risks by up to 35-65% or more. For more information, read this handout and visit some of the resources.

## Diabetes Centre Calgary can help you:

- Understand your glucose levels & options to control them.
- Understand how to manage or start insulin pump therapy.
- Understand how to keep babe and mom healthy through diabetes in pregnancy.
- Access help for diabetes specific stress (e.g. needle phobia)

Ask your doctor to refer you to our program or view our website:

[www.EndoMetab.ca](http://www.EndoMetab.ca)



## Resources to help you self-manage diabetes are listed in this handout:

1. [Steps to Stay Healthy with Diabetes – A, B, C, DD, E, SSS](#) page 2.
2. Resources to Help
  - [Education](#) page 3
  - [Seek individual help from these resources if ...](#) page 4.
  - [Seek urgent help from these resources if ...](#) page 5.
  - [If You've decided to accept an appointment, what's next?](#) ...page 6.

Diabetes Canada Recommended Checks to stay healthy with diabetes	
A	<p>A1c: Measures “average” blood glucose level over past 2-3 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for a standing-order A1c from your doctor so it is easier to get an A1c done every 3-4 months. You do not need to fast for this lab-work.</li> <li>• Target is usually 7% or less. Most people will aim for before-meal glucose checks of 4-7 mmol/L to reach an A1c of 7% or less. Check with your healthcare team for your targets.</li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> A target A1c can lower the risk of diabetes complications. Each 1% drop in A1c (e.g. from 8% to 7%) may lower risk by up to 35% in type 2 diabetes. Dropping the A1c from 9% to 7% may lower the risk by up to 60% in type 1 diabetes.</li> </ul>
B	<p>Blood pressure (BP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for less than 130/80. Monitor at home, pharmacy, MD office.</li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> Controlling blood pressure can reduce the risk of stroke, heart attack, dementia, erectile dysfunction and damage to eyes and kidneys.</li> </ul>
C	<p>Cholesterol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your doctor to send you to lab yearly (you don’t need to fast).</li> <li>• LDL target is less than 2.0 mmol/L for most with diabetes</li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> High LDL and diabetes both raise the risk of heart attack &amp; stroke.</li> </ul>
D, D	<p>Drugs to reduce glucose levels and to increase cardio-renal protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See your doctor to discuss possible medications.</li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> Many medicines help reduce glucose levels, which can reduce complications. Some medications help reduce the risk of stroke, heart attack and kidney damage in different ways. Some medications help with both at the same time.</li> </ul> <p>Dental care: Perform daily dental care. Have regular dental appointments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> Diabetes increases the risk of gum disease; gums support teeth!</li> </ul>
E	<p>Exercise and Healthy Eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> Your healthy habits help increase overall wellness while lowering blood sugars, the risk of heart disease and other complications.</li> </ul>
S, S, S	<p>Self-Management Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set goals and identify barriers that keep you from reaching your goals • <b>Why it’s important:</b> Goals focus your energy and help with next steps.</li> </ul> <p>Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart: Have BP, cholesterol and other tests done by doctor.</li> <li>• Feet: Examine feet daily. See doctor if you have open wounds or concerns.</li> <li>• Eyes: Get a diabetes eye exam with optometrist or ophthalmologist.</li> <li>• Kidney: Have urine and blood checks done yearly by your doctor.</li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> The sooner complications are found, the sooner they can be managed and the less likely they’ll affect your quality of life.</li> </ul> <p>Stop Smoking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When ready, see your doctor, pharmacist or visit <a href="https://www.albertaquits.ca/">https://www.albertaquits.ca/</a></li> <li>• <b>Why it’s important:</b> Quitting smoking reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, many cancers, dying early and exposing loved-ones to smoke.</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES: EDUCATION & ANSWERS

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1. Phone-line, Email
  - a. Diabetes Canada's support services answers more than 20,000 questions a year: 1-800-226-8464 or visit their website to email them a question or to read FAQ <https://www.diabetes.ca/campaigns/information---support-virtual-care> .
  - b. Diabetes Educator: If you already have a diabetes educator in your primary care network (doctor's office) or diabetes clinic, call him or her. Many pharmacists are also diabetes educators. Ask!
  
2. Diabetes Classes:
  - a. Alberta Healthy Living Program Classes: To view and sign up online for virtual diabetes classes visit [www.ahs.ca/ahlp](http://www.ahs.ca/ahlp) Search classes by topic, i.e. diabetes.
  - b. Diabetes Canada Virtual Classes <https://www.diabetes.ca/get-involved/localprograms---events/virtual-diabetes-classes>
  - c. Primary Care Network (PCN) education: Find and visit your PCNs website at [www.mypcn.ca](http://www.mypcn.ca) to see what education classes they may offer. PCNs are groups of family doctors that offer extra services to their patients.
  
3. Online Education (handouts, webpages, videos)
  - a. Diabetes Canada Education <http://guidelines.diabetes.ca/patient-resources>
  - b. Diabetes Canada Home page [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)
  - c. Additional diabetes resources (including Low Blood Sugar handout) listed by Diabetes Center Calgary: [www.EndoMetab.ca](http://www.EndoMetab.ca) > Patients and Family > type of diabetes
  - d. MyHealth.Alberta: Visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/> and search Diabetes
  
4. Glucose Monitoring (Purchases and "How To"):
  - a. Pharmacies: Pharmacy staff can sell and train you on glucose measuring devices obtained through their pharmacy e.g. glucose meters, sensors.
  - b. Diabetes educators: Educators at your Primary Care Network (doctor's office) or diabetes centre (if you are currently attending) may assist with trainings.
  
5. Insulin Pump Therapy
  - a. Please view the following webpage to learn about Diabetes Centre Calgary's Insulin Pump Program and the Alberta Insulin Pump Therapy Program: [www.EndoMetab.ca](http://www.EndoMetab.ca) > Patients and Family > Insulin Pump Therapy

## RESOURCES: SEEK INDIVIDUAL HELP FROM RESOURCES BELOW IF...

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Seek help if ...

- You are planning a pregnancy.
- You frequently have glucose readings less than 4.0 mmol/L each week
- You frequently have glucose readings above 10 mmol/L each week
- You are frequently peeing, thirsty, having infections
- You have an open wound on your leg or foot
- You are due for regular diabetes checks for A1c, heart, feet, eyes, kidneys
- You find it hard to take care of your health because of finances, disabilities, stress, and other mental health concerns.

### Make an appointment to discuss with:

1. Your family doctor, nurse practitioner or the health educators in your Primary Care Network [www.mypcn.ca](http://www.mypcn.ca). If you don't have a family doctor, find one at [www.calgaryareadocs.com](http://www.calgaryareadocs.com). Please note, the Mosaic PCN also has a Refugee Health Clinic <http://mosaicpcn.ca/programs/refugee-health/>
2. Your pharmacist. They may be a diabetes educator. Ask!
3. Your diabetes centre or diabetes doctor: If you don't see an educator at a diabetes centre, it may be that your diabetes doesn't need specialist care. Ask your doctor if you need a referral to a diabetes centre or to a diabetes doctor.
4. The people at these resources:
  - a. **Alberta 211** (call or text 211) or <https://ab.211.ca/>. This is Alberta's online directory to help you navigate to resources for mental health, finances, addiction, crisis, disability, employment, food, housing, indigenous peoples, legal & more.
  - b. **Alberta Supports** 1-877-644-9992 province-wide (TTY: 1-800-232-7215) <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-supports.aspx> Alberta Supports can help you access more than 30 programs and 120 services for seniors, people with disabilities, job seekers, parents and families, homelessness, financial assistance, abuse, and family violence prevention.
  - c. **Access Mental Health** 403-943-1500 or The Distress Centre [www.distresscentre.com](http://www.distresscentre.com) to help you find the right resource.

## RESOURCES: SEEK URGENT HELP FROM RESOURCES BELOW IF ...

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- 1. You feel distressed and worry you may hurt yourself:**
  - a. Call or Text 988 or visit <https://988.ca/> for Canada's Suicide Crisis Helpline
  - b. Call the Distress Centre Calgary 403-266-4357 (403-266-HELP)
  
- 2. You have signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke**  
([www.heartandstroke.ca/heart](http://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart) or [www.heartandstroke.ca/stroke](http://www.heartandstroke.ca/stroke) )
  - a. Call 9-1-1 or have someone drive you immediately to urgent care or an emergency department. You should be seen immediately. Do not drive yourself.
  
- 3. You are on an insulin pump and it stops working. (Remember, you cannot be without insulin for more than 2 hours.)**
  - a. Use the plan you have for coming off pump or
  - b. Call your diabetes educator during daytime hours or
  - c. Call your diabetes doctor or their after-hours physician.
  - d. See general guidelines for Prevention of Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) in Insulin Pump Therapy or Coming off Pump: [www.EndoMetab.ca](http://www.EndoMetab.ca) > Patients and Family > Insulin Pump Therapy > Handouts
  
- 4. You have type 1 diabetes or take a pill called an SGLT-2 inhibitor and have nausea or vomiting, abdominal pain and/or trouble breathing you may be experiencing diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).**
  - a. Visit urgent care, an emergency department or if you feel too unwell to travel, call 91-1. Calgary emergency department wait times are listed here: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/waittimes/waittimes.aspx>
  - b. You may also test ketones (see the DKA handout you were provided) and call your diabetes educator during daytime hours to help determine if it is DKA.
  
- 5. You (or another person) with type 1 diabetes is having a severe low blood sugar. Glucose tablets or juice are not working or the person is unconscious, severely agitated or not responding to you.**
  - a. Call 9-1-1 so EMS can respond to treat
  - b. And administer glucagon if you've been trained on this
  
- 6. You learn you are pregnant.**
  - a. See your doctor now to make an urgent referral to a "Diabetes in Pregnancy Clinic".
  
- 7. You made a big mistake with your insulin, like taking too much of the fast-acting insulin.**
  - a. Call Poison and Drug Information Services (PADIS) for insulin dose errors Alberta & NWT 1-800-332-1414 available 24 hours a day.

- b. Call your diabetes educator during daytime hours. Don't leave a message if unable to reach an educator. Call PADIS immediately.

## **IF YOU have an appointment at Diabetes Centre Calgary**

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1. At your first appointment:
  - a. We ask questions to get to know you better. This includes questions about how we can help you, your goals and your medical history.
  - b. Together we decide on a plan for future visits to help you achieve your goals.
2. Please prepare for your appointment, so we can better help you.
  - a. Bring a three-day record of what you eat and glucose readings.
  - b. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early.
  - c. Prepare to pay for parking if this is an in-person appointment. You may wish to download the AHS Parking app. (Parking at Sunridge Medical Gallery and South Calgary Health Centre is free.)
  - d. Visit our webpage (listed on the first page of this handout) for any of the following:
    - i. Forms for food records
    - ii. How to link your glucose data to Diabetes Centre Calgary cloud accounts if you are using a sensor
    - iii. Insulin pump program
    - iv. Educational handouts
3. Tell us what you hope the visits with an educator will help you with. These may help you find answers before coming to your appointment.
  - a. Nutrition to help with:
  - b. Medications to help with:
  - c. Help with concerns that impact your ability to self-manage diabetes (like accessing supplies and adjusting to diabetes).
  - d. Other: