

For Great Diabetes Care, Remember Your ABCs!

Taking good care of your diabetes can be complex and confusing. This handy list will make remembering all the steps you need to take as easy as A B C D E F G H I!

A is for A1C.

The A1C (“A-one-C”) test—short for hemoglobin A_{1c}—measures your average blood glucose (sugar) over the past 3 months.

Suggested target: Below 7

How often: At least twice a year

A is also for albuminuria.

Albuminuria means protein in the urine. A test that measures your urine microalbumin-to-creatinine ratio can detect kidney disease very early, when it can usually be stopped. This can prevent dialysis or kidney transplantation later on.

Suggested target: Below 30

How often: At least once a year

And, finally, A is for aspirin.

Taking low-dose aspirin every day can help prevent heart attacks and strokes. Children and young adults with no history of heart disease should not take aspirin without a doctor’s order, nor should some older adults. Check with your doctor before starting daily aspirin.

B is for blood pressure.

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard and can cause damage to your kidneys and eyes.

Suggested target: Below 130/80

How often: At every visit

C is for cholesterol.

Bad cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries, leading to heart attacks and strokes.

Suggested LDL target: Below 100

How often: At least once a year

D is for diabetes education.

Help your doctor help you. The more you know about how food, exercise, and medicines affect your diabetes control, the better you and your doctor can work together to make any needed changes.

Suggested resources: Dietitians, nurse diabetes educators

How often: Ongoing

E is for eye exam.

Regular eye exams can catch diabetic eye disease early enough to prevent eventual blindness.

How often: At least once a year

F is for foot care

Keep an eye on your feet. If you have nerve disease and can’t feel your feet, your feet can’t tell you when something is wrong.

How often: Check your feet daily. Remind your doctor to check them at every visit. Get an extensive foot exam once a year.

G is for glucose (sugar) monitoring.

If you know when your blood sugar level is too high or too low, you’ll know better how to treat it.

How often: Decide with your doctor.

H is for staying healthy.

For people with diabetes, getting the flu or pneumonia can lead to serious complications. Avoid them by getting vaccinated.

How often: Flu vaccine, every year; pneumonia, at least once.

I is for identifying special medical needs.

Complications are complicated. As they occur, your doctor may need to send you to various specialists. Voicing your health concerns at every visit can help your doctor spot trouble and get any extra help you need quickly.

How often: When needed

