



### What is New Directions in Diabetes Care?

The California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) is the professional association for the state's family physicians. [Practice or physician name] have chosen to be a part of CAFP's New Directions in Diabetes Care, a project to help us optimize our approach to caring for patients with diabetes. This project is a year-long collaborative where our staff forms a team and participates in a series of learning sessions focused on redesigning office practices and improving clinical care. These sessions help us provide you with excellent care and make our offices more efficient so more time is devoted to you. Part of this process is creating a partnership with our patients, which includes education on diabetes and how to manage it.

### Checking Your Blood Sugar

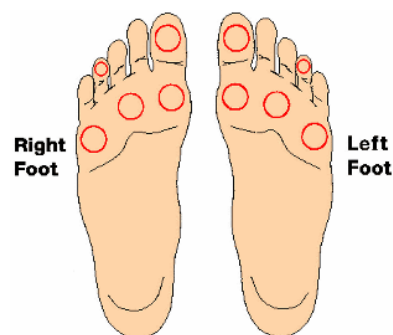
Blood sugar tests are important because they measure how well your body processes sugar (glucose). The test your doctor performs to check your glucose level is called the HbA1c or the "A1c" test that tells your average blood sugar level for the past 2 to 3 months. The blood sugar test you do at home shows your blood sugar level at the time of the test. The American Diabetes Association recommends reaching an A1c level of less than 7%. Each person has their own specific goal but it is important to meet your goal. Here are some questions you can ask your doctor about diabetes and your A1c:

- What should my blood sugar level be in the morning? After meals? At night?
- What is my A1c goal? Where am I now?
- How can I reach my A1c goal?

### Foot Care

You may be wondering why your doctor or medical assistant asks you to take off your shoes and socks during your visit. High blood sugar over time can cause damage to the nerves and blood vessels that go to your legs and feet. This can lead to sores and blisters that you can't feel, which is why your doctor is examining your foot. Take care of your feet, because you only have one pair! The following are some foot care tips:

- Wear shoes that fit well
- Check your feet for redness, swelling, cuts, scratches, and/or blisters
- Don't go barefoot; protect your feet
- Trim your toenails to reduce infections from ingrown toenails.



### Take Action

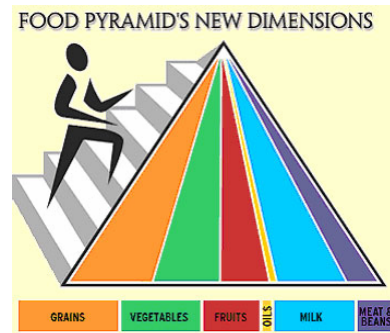
You can find out ways to help improve access to care, eliminate discrimination against people because of their diabetes, and make sure the government is funding diabetes research and programs by going to the American Diabetes Association's website at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org). Take a stance and join the fight against diabetes.

### Health Information for the Family – [www.FamilyDoctor.org](http://www.FamilyDoctor.org)

The American Academy of Family Physicians has created a comprehensive website for your entire family. The website is in English and Spanish and covers many topics, including: healthy living, controlling high blood pressure, medication information, and more. If you have any questions about your family's health, this website is an excellent, patient-centered resource.

## Nutrition

Good nutrition is an important part of managing your diabetes. Maintaining a healthy diet helps you lose weight, feel good, and lower your risk for problems caused by your diabetes. The food pyramid can help you make wise food choices by dividing up the foods you should and should not be eating. Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to make your own personal eating pyramid, and talk to your doctor about strategies to lose weight and stay healthy. Or, go to [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) for more information about diabetes meal plans.



Here are some helpful tips for weight loss:

- Substitute foods, don't eliminate them. Try a reduced-fat version of your favorite snack
- Unsweetened iced tea and soda water are excellent substitutes for soft drinks or juice drinks
- Share a single dessert, or better yet, finish with fruit instead of reaching for chocolate cake.

## Eye Care

Diabetes can hurt your eyes. If you have high blood pressure, the vessels in your eyes can weaken which can affect your eyesight. It is important to go to an eye doctor every year and have your eyes dilated so the doctor can see the back of your eye. Also, ask your doctor about other eye problems such as cataracts and glaucoma.

## High Cholesterol: What Is It and What You Need To Know

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made in the liver and found in certain foods like eggs, meat and poultry. The body needs some cholesterol in order to function properly, but the body only needs a small amount. The "bad cholesterol" is known as LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and the "good cholesterol" is HDL (high-density lipoprotein). When you have too much cholesterol your blood vessels become clogged, which makes it harder for blood to flow through your body. Talk to your doctor and make sure you have your cholesterol under control. Your cholesterol levels should be:

- Total cholesterol: below 200
- LDL (bad) cholesterol: below 100
- HDL (good) cholesterol: above 40 in men and above 50 in women
- Triglycerides (another type of fat in the blood): below 150

## Are You Ready to Quit Smoking?



Smoking and diabetes is a dangerous combination. Once you quit, you'll lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, nerve and kidney disease. Your blood circulation and overall health will also improve. There are many resources out there to help you stop smoking. For free support with a trained counselor, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-877-44U-QUIT. Or go online to [www.anti-smoking.org](http://www.anti-smoking.org) to get more information on becoming smoke-free.

## Do You Want to Learn More about Diabetes?

- American Diabetes Association; 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2382); [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- National Diabetes Education Program; 1-800-438-5383; [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)
- American Association of Diabetes Educators: 1-800-338-3633; [www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 1-877-232-3422; [www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)

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Questions about this newsletter? Contact Jane Cho, New Directions in Diabetes Care Project Coordinator, at [jcho@familydocs.org](mailto:jcho@familydocs.org). If you need more information about diabetes risks and treatments, talk to your doctor.