

# Dialog

## LIVING WITH DIABETES

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Allina Hospitals & Clinics

## Weight control = Improved quality of life

"Weight control and exercise not only improves diabetes control; they improve quality of life," says Cara Walcheck, registered dietitian, Allina Medical Clinic – Diabetes Education.

For example, many people with diabetes are on five or more medicines. Healthy eating habits and regular exercise may decrease that need.

"It is possible for you to be on lower doses of medicines with fewer side effects," says Walcheck.

### Why lose weight?

Extra abdominal fat impairs the body's ability to process and make insulin. When your body cannot effectively process and make insulin, you have type 2 diabetes. That's why getting rid of that "spare tire" around one's middle is important to diabetes prevention and management.

### A proven link

A 2002 diabetes study verified the link between diabetes and weight. The study involved adults who were at risk of getting type 2 diabetes. Those who increased their physical activity to 150 minutes each week and lost 5 to 7 percent of their body weight (10 to 15 pounds) reduced their progression to diabetes by 58 percent.



### Successful weight loss

Walcheck outlines these steps to successful weight loss.

**Decide to do it.** If you don't want to make changes to lose weight, it's not going to happen.

**Have realistic expectations.** Losing 100 pounds in six months is probably unrealistic. Losing 10 to 15 percent of your body weight (usually 15 to 25 pounds) is more doable and better for your diabetes control.

**Start exercising and stick with it.** Begin with 10-minute increments, building up to at least 30 – preferably 60 – minutes a day.

**Look at your BMI or body mass index.** It determines whether you're at a healthy weight. Your doctor or nurse can help you calculate that figure. A BMI of 25 or more means you're overweight.

### Keep tabs on what, when and how much you eat.

Walcheck encourages her patients to keep a food diary. She reviews the diary with them and points out simple changes they can make in order to lose weight and keep it off. Common suggestions include:

- Decrease the size of food portions.
- Drink diet pop or water instead of sweetened drinks, like regular soda or Kool aid.
- Go out to eat no more than twice a week.

**Gradually make changes you can live with.** If you think of it as a temporary diet and exercise program, you'll go back to old habits and gain back the weight you lost, plus more.

**Stay away from fad diets.** They might have good short-term results, but it's hard to keep them. Many people gain back the weight they lost and then some.



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You are a key player on your health care team when it comes to managing your diabetes.

Spotlight on: Weight loss

# Talk with your health care team

Communicating well with your health care team is a big part of managing your diabetes successfully.

## Bring up concerns right away.

If you think there might be a problem, don't wait until your next appointment to bring it up.

For example, if you notice changes in your eyesight, let your eye doctor (ophthalmologist) know right away. The same goes for any kind of discomfort you may have, or general worries about your condition.



## Ask questions.

Write down questions when you think of them and bring them to your next appointment.

- If you have heard about other ways to treat diabetes, it's OK to ask your doctor or other health care providers what they think about them.
- It's OK to ask if you can bring someone with you into the office or the examining room. Having someone else listen to your health care providers can help you remember what they said.
- It's OK to ask what your medicine is for or how it helps you.
- It's OK to ask if any other medicines you take have any effect on your diabetes medicine. That goes for any kind of medicine at all, even if it's not prescription medicine. If the doctor changes your medicine or anything else about your treatment, ask why.

It's also a good idea to take notes during your appointments. This can help you remember the answers to your questions.

## Say what's on your mind.

Being open and honest is the best way for you to help your health care team help you.

For example, if it's hard to stick with your eating plan, talk about that with your dietitian or doctor. If some of your medicine makes you feel bad, don't stop taking it without first talking to your doctor.

### Who is on my health care team?

You are the key member of your health care team. In addition to your doctor, nurse and specialists, your team may also include a diabetes educator, dietitian, eye doctor, pharmacist, exercise specialist and others.

You and your health care team need to work together to find the best ways to control your diabetes. If you have questions or concerns, calling your clinic can help connect you with a team member.

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# 'Muscle moving' means good diabetes control



The body uses blood glucose to help muscles move. Regular muscle movement helps your body stabilize its blood glucose levels.

- If you take insulin, regular activity can reduce your daily injection requirement.
- If you don't take insulin, regular activity can improve how your body regulates its own insulin.

Making activity part of your routine also can help you gain energy, lose weight, and lower high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

## Get started

Check with your doctor about how to make activity part of your routine. He or she might suggest starting with a few easy exercises.

You don't always have to have a formal exercise program. Just try to do at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. Simple things like parking further away, doing yard work, using the stairs instead of the elevator and going for walks can help you manage your diabetes

## Keep going

In making activity part of your life, it's good to remember the need to increase your heart rate for at least 15 minutes a day. Aerobic activities like walking, jogging, bicycling or swimming help keep your heart and lungs – not to mention the rest of your body – healthy.

Active people with diabetes should keep these tips in mind:

- Warm up and cool down. This gets your muscles ready to work harder and helps your circulation return to normal afterward.
- Check your blood glucose before and after exercising. Avoid exercise if your glucose is more than 240.
- Carry fast-acting sugar in case of a low blood glucose.
- Wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace in case of an emergency.

## Fresh vegetable dip

Jazz up your fresh summer vegetables with this tasty dip. Serves 12.

### Ingredients

- 1 pint cottage cheese (can be fat free or 1 percent)
- Grated onion to taste
- 1 cup Hellmann's® light mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Few drops of Tabasco to taste
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon celery seed
- ½ teaspoon caraway seed
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

### Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Serve with fresh vegetables.

### Nutrition information per serving

Serving: ¼ cup (59 grams)  
 Servings per recipe: 12  
 Calories: 94 (62 from fat)  
 Fat: 7 grams (1 saturated fat, 0 trans fats)  
 Cholesterol: 2 milligram  
 Sodium: 406 milligrams  
 Total carbohydrate: 3 grams (0 fiber, 2 sugar)  
 Protein: 5 grams

**For more information about managing your diabetes, try these resources:**

***Dialog* online**

The online version of *Dialog: Living with Diabetes* offers more in-depth information and links to helpful resources.

1. Visit [www.allina.com](http://www.allina.com).
2. Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click on the *Health e-newsletters* link.
4. Select *Dialog: Living with Diabetes*.

**Diabetes education**

For a list of Allina Medical Clinic locations offering diabetes education, call Allina Class Registration at 1-866-904-9962 (or visit [allina.com/Classes](http://allina.com/Classes)).

**Allina Community Pharmacies**

This group of 15 pharmacies offers reliable in-person and online services, including free mail delivery of most medicines. The Abbott Northwestern Hospital Piper Building location specializes in diabetes supplies. Call 763-863-5370 or visit [www.allina.com/pharmacy](http://www.allina.com/pharmacy).

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