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Type 2 Diabetes Support: A Proactive Guide to Managing Your Health

Receiving a diagnosis of Type 2 Diabetes (T2DM) can feel overwhelming, but it is a highly manageable metabolic condition. By pairing consistent daily self-care habits with your prescribed medical plan, you can stabilize your blood sugar levels, protect your cardiovascular system, and maintain a high quality of life.

Daily Pillars of Diabetes Self-Care

Managing diabetes at home is built on minor, consistent lifestyle modifications that directly improve your insulin sensitivity.

Smart Carbohydrate and Nutritional Balancing

You do not need to cut out all carbohydrates, but managing the *type* and *quantity* matters:

- **Focus on Complex Carbs & Fiber:** Swap refined sugars and white flours for high-fiber alternatives like lentils, beans, oats, and non-starchy vegetables. As noted in the appetite and glucose management strategies on the [Good Health Outcomes Resources Page](#), soluble fiber slows down glucose absorption, preventing steep post-meal blood sugar spikes.
- **Prioritize Lean Proteins:** Include lean proteins (chicken, fish, tofu) in your meals to increase satiety and keep blood sugar stable.
- **Eliminate Sugary Liquids:** Fruit juices, regular sodas, and sweet teas cause instant blood sugar spikes. Focus instead on structured hydration with plain water or unsweetened teas.

Exercise as a Natural Treatment

Physical movement acts like a natural medicine for diabetes by allowing your muscles to clear sugar from your blood without relying entirely on insulin.

- **Aerobic Routine:** Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity (like brisk walking or swimming) per week.
 - **The Strength Advantage:** Incorporate resistance bands or light weight training at least twice a week. Increasing your lean muscle mass permanently improves your baseline insulin sensitivity and metabolic rate.
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Essential Health Monitoring at Home

Proactive tracking helps you and your provider catch trends before they turn into complications:

- **Routine Glucose Testing:** Check your blood sugar using a traditional finger-stick glucometer or a Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) exactly as recommended by your provider (typically fasting in the morning and/or two hours after a meal). Electronic devices are available to do this without a fingerstick, yet they come with a cost. Amazon shared prices for these devices range from \$25-\$60. Their consistency and accuracy is not fully known.
- **The Daily Foot Exam:** Diabetes can cause reduced nerve sensation (neuropathy) and slower blood circulation in your extremities. Make it a strict habit to inspect the bottoms of your feet daily using a smartphone flashlight from your [Home Diagnostic Kit List](#) to check for minor cuts, blisters, or red patches before they turn into ulcers.

- **Track Your Blood Pressure:** Diabetes increases your risk for cardiovascular stress. Keep a regular log of your numbers using the printable [Good Health Outcomes Blood Pressure Log](#) to share at your next check-up.

Highlights of Commonly Used Diabetes Medications

While lifestyle efforts are foundational, most individuals require medications to protect their organs and maintain optimal glucose control. Here are the highlights of the most commonly prescribed classes:

Medication Class	Common Examples	How It Supports You
Biguanides	Metformin	The traditional first-line daily pill. It lowers the amount of sugar your liver releases into your body and helps your muscles absorb glucose more effectively.
GLP-1 Receptor Agonists	Semaglutide (Ozempic/Rybelsus), Tirzepatide (Mounjaro)	Injected weekly (or taken as a daily pill). They mimic natural gut hormones to slow digestion, stimulate insulin release only when blood sugar is high, and suppress appetite. They offer excellent cardiovascular and kidney protection.
SGLT2 Inhibitors	Empagliflozin (Jardiance), Dapagliflozin (Farxiga)	A daily pill that causes your kidneys to filter excess sugar out of your blood and flush it out through your urine. These are highly valued for protecting against heart failure and kidney disease.
Insulin Therapy	Glargine (Lantus), Lispro (Humalog)	An injectable hormone used when the pancreas can no longer produce enough insulin naturally. It moves sugar out of the bloodstream and into the cells immediately.

When to Contact Your Healthcare Provider

Managing diabetes means knowing how to identify and react to out-of-range blood sugar emergencies:

1. **Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar - Under 70 mg/dL):** Characterized by sudden shakiness, sweating, dizziness, confusion, or a rapid heart rate. Treat immediately with the 15-15 Rule: consume 15 grams of fast-acting carbs (like 4 ounces of fruit juice or 3-4 glucose tablets), wait 15 minutes, and re-test.
2. **Hyperglycemia with Ketones (Very High Blood Sugar):** If your glucose is consistently over 240 mg/dL and is accompanied by persistent vomiting, a fruity odor to your breath, extreme thirst, or deep, rapid breathing, seek immediate emergency care.
3. **Non-Healing Wounds:** Any blister, cut, or sore on your feet or legs that fails to improve after a few days requires an prompt physical evaluation.

Take Control of Your Metrics: The ultimate benchmark of long-term diabetes management is your A1C test, which measures your average blood sugar over the past 3 months. Schedule a virtual or in-person evaluation on the [Good Health Outcomes Homepage](#) to review your trends, optimize your medication timeline, and build a sustainable self-care strategy.

The above information was reviewed and validated by David Campbell-O'Dell, DNP, APRN-IP, FNP-BC, FAANP