

Your General Practitioner

You should have a check up with your **General Practitioner** every 3 to 6 months. At these visits your General Practitioner will:

- take your blood pressure and record your height and weight
- order a blood test to check your HbA1c (glyco-haemoglobin) levels (to check the average level of glucose in your blood over the last 2-3 months)
 - every 3-6 months if you are on insulin
 - every 6-12 months if you are not on insulin
- set goals with you about your management of your diabetes and discuss them with you regularly
- do a basic examination of your feet every 6 months

Every Year your General Practitioner should:

- discuss how you are managing your diabetes
- check your HbA1c levels
- take your blood pressure and record your weight and height
- check your cholesterol/triglyceride levels (at least every year or more often if they are above normal)
- ask you to do a urine test to check for early signs of diabetic kidney problems
- discuss referral to have your eyes examined to monitor for early signs of retinopathy
- If you have type 1 diabetes - refer you to an endocrinologist
- consider referring you for a check up with a Diabetes Educator, Dietitian-nutritionist, Podiatrist or other health professional as required

Has your General Practitioner checked these things with you? If you are not sure, ask.

Who else can help me manage my diabetes?

A **Diabetes Educator** can give you information on why managing your diabetes is important and how you can manage your diabetes yourself, including methods of monitoring and medication use. It is recommended that you see a Diabetes Educator:

- when you are diagnosed with diabetes
- when you change the way you manage your diabetes [for example - if you change from diet alone to taking tablets or, from taking tablets to using insulin]
- if your HbA1c is persistently above 8%
- if you would like more advice on the day to day management of your diabetes
- if you are pregnant

Have you ticked any of these? If so talk to your General Practitioner about a referral

Care of your eyes

Regular eye examinations with an **Ophthalmologist, trained GP or Optometrist** are important for all people with diabetes. Early treatment can prevent the visual loss that may accompany diabetes. Your General Practitioner could refer you to have your eyes examined by an Ophthalmologist, or if appropriate, an Optometrist or your General Practitioner may do this:

- when you are diagnosed with diabetes
- at least every 1-2 years afterward

Is it time for you to have your eyes examined? If so talk to your General Practitioner about a referral.

Information on a healthy diet and lifestyle

A **Dietitian-nutritionist** can help you make positive changes to the types of food you are currently eating. People with type 2 diabetes are able to improve their blood glucose levels, blood fat levels and body weight by adopting healthy eating habits. It is recommended that you see a Dietitian-nutritionist:

- when you are diagnosed with diabetes
- if you change the way you manage your diabetes (for example - if you change from diet alone to taking tablets or, from taking tablets to using insulin)
- if your HbA1c is persistently above 8%
- if you have high cholesterol
- if you have diabetes and another condition (for example - problems with your heart or circulation)
- if you are overweight
- if you have problems managing your diabetes

If you have ticked any of the above, consider making an appointment to see a Dietitian-Nutritionist or talk to your General Practitioner about this.

The members of the diabetes team listed in this brochure can help you take control of your diabetes management and live life to the fullest. Talk to your General Practitioner about how you can work with this team.

Care of your feet

Podiatrists can advise on foot care needs. Uncontrolled diabetes can damage the nerves in the legs and feet causing numbness or a burning sensation. If this happens, you can injure your feet without knowing it. If your diabetes is poorly controlled for a long period of time, the blood vessels can become thick, rigid and narrow. Damage to the blood flow in your feet and legs can lead to problems such as infection, ulcers and gangrene. It is recommended that you see a Podiatrist if:

- you have a foot ulcer or have had a foot ulcer in the past
- you have had part or all of a foot amputated
- you have tingling, burning, pins and needles, pain or numbness in your feet
- you have been told that you have problems with blood flow to your feet
- you have corns or calluses or other foot problems including injuries that are slow to heal
- your foot has changed shape or you have trouble finding shoes that fit you
- you have problems walking
- it is 12 months or more since your last visit

If you have ticked any or the above, consider making an appointment to see a Podiatrist or talk to your General Practitioner about this.



What should happen when I am first diagnosed with diabetes?

Soon after you are **first diagnosed** with diabetes you can expect your General Practitioner to:

- give you information about diabetes so that you understand what diabetes is and why managing your diabetes is important
- check your weight, height and blood pressure
- order a blood test to check your cholesterol/triglyceride (blood fat) levels
- talk about the things you can do yourself to manage your diabetes and help you work out a plan to manage your diabetes

He/she may also:

- refer you to have your eyes examined to check for early signs of diabetic eye disease (retinopathy)
- talk to you about registering with the National Diabetes Services Scheme (so that you can purchase subsidised diabetes equipment if you need it and receive other educational material)
- refer you to a Diabetes Educator and a Dietitian-nutritionist to give you more information about how you can manage your diabetes yourself
- consider referring you to an Endocrinologist and/or Podiatrist

It is reasonable to request your General Practitioner to refer you to any of these services.



Other specialist advice

Endocrinologists or **Physicians** trained in diabetes management can provide specialist diabetes care. Your General Practitioner may refer you to an Endocrinologist or a Physician. You may also be referred if you have type 1 diabetes or if:

- your HbA1c level is persistently above 8%
- you have been in hospital for a diabetes related problem
- you have other problems associated with diabetes
- you are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant

Check with your General Practitioner on your need to see an Endocrinologist or Physician if you have ticked any of these boxes.

A **Psychologist** or a **Psychiatrist** can help you make positive changes to your life that will make managing your diabetes easier. Your General Practitioner could refer you to a Psychologist or Psychiatrist if:

- you suffer from stress because of your diabetes
- you are depressed or anxious
- you are having problems managing your diabetes

If you have ticked any of the boxes above, talk to your General Practitioner about a referral.



Diabetes Care For Adults What you should know

This brochure provides only general information about how the diabetes management team can help you manage your diabetes.

If you would like more detailed information about managing your diabetes, contact:

- **General Practitioners**
- **Hospitals**
- **Community health centres**
- **Diabetes centres in your local area**
- **Diabetes Australia Queensland**

1300 136 588

<http://www.daq.org.au>

Further copies of this brochure can be found on:

- www.daq.org.au
- www.health.qld.gov.au

click on publications and then diabetes.



Diabetes Care For Adults

What you should know

Working together with the health professionals who are involved in caring for people with diabetes can help you to maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent or reduce diabetes complications.

In turn, those health professionals need to work together to provide you with appropriate advice. Health professionals have developed a Care Pathway for Diabetes and it is useful to understand this pathway to ensure you are receiving optimal care.

You may have seen this poster in your General Practitioner's office or diabetes centre. This poster covers all areas of care for adults with diabetes and outlines the recommended care for all people with diabetes in Queensland. Your diabetes team will use the information on this poster to help you maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent or reduce diabetes complications.

To help you stay well, the following questions and checklists will help you keep track of the tests and check-ups you should have and when you should have them.

Tick the checklists to give you an idea of when you should see members of your diabetes team.