

# Key actions for living better with diabetes

## Consumer Brochure

If you have diabetes, the three key actions in this brochure will help you manage your diabetes and reduce your risk of diabetes related complications. ●

### Diabetes explained

Our bodies use the hormone insulin to transport sugars (glucose) from the blood stream into cells, where the sugars are converted into energy. We get these sugars from certain foods containing carbs such as bread, pasta, rice etc.

With the most common type of diabetes, the body does not make enough insulin or insulin does not work properly, so the glucose builds up in the blood stream. Over time, the high glucose in the blood stream has damaging effects on the heart, brain, kidneys, nerve fibres, and eyes. The whole body can be affected. These complications are preventable and reversible by good glucose control. Living with diabetes can also affect mental health.



Diabetes explained



Exercise programs



Healthy diet for  
diabetes

## Action 1: Move more and eat well

Making activity and a healthy diet part of each day can help you to feel better both physically and mentally. It can help you to lose excess weight, which could help to reduce your blood pressure, blood glucose levels and cholesterol. Your medicines also work better if you are making [exercise](#) and a [healthy diet](#) part of daily life.



If exercise and a healthy diet is not part of your daily routine, look at ways you might add it in.

Tips:

- Start small - park a little further away at the local shops or hang out the washing rather than using the dryer.
- Build up gradually - walk further or try a new activity like swimming or a local fitness class.
- A dietitian can help you establish healthy eating habits.
- An exercise physiologist can develop an exercise plan tailored for you.

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## Action 2: Ask your GP about a Medicines Review

[Managing Type 2 diabetes](#) and its complications often involves taking medicines. A Medicines Review can help you learn more about your diabetes medicines and how to get the best from them.

As diabetes treatments change and improve over time, a Medicines Review can also help make sure you're prescribed the medicines that benefit you the most. For example, if you have certain conditions such as heart or kidney disease, there are medicines that can help these conditions as well as improve your diabetes.



For more information about diabetes medicines

### If you have diabetes and answer Yes or Not sure, talk to your GP about having a Medicines Review

1. Was your last Medicines Review over 12 months ago?  
 Yes |  No |  Not sure
2. Do you have heart disease and want to find out about specific treatments that might benefit you?  
 Yes |  No |  Not sure
3. Do you have kidney disease and want to find out about specific treatments that might benefit you?  
 Yes |  No |  Not sure

[Continued >](#)



4. Are you concerned about how your medicines work together including medicines you buy without a prescription e.g. vitamins or supplements?

Yes |  No |  Not sure

**Always talk to your GP or pharmacist before stopping or changing the way you take your diabetes medicine.**

## Action 3: Use the Annual Diabetes Cycle of Care

**Talk to your GP and healthcare team about what you can do to improve your symptoms, quality of life and wellbeing.**

Your GP and healthcare team can help you use the [Annual Diabetes Cycle of Care](#) to help keep track of the [tests and health checks](#) that you need. Your GP might suggest you have a GP Management Plan to help support this. Write down what is important for you to discuss when developing your plan with your GP.

### What other actions can I take?

- Stay up to date with your vaccinations.
  - Get vaccinated against COVID-19.
  - Get your annual flu vaccine.
  - Ask your GP when your pneumococcal vaccine is due.
  - Ask your GP about having the herpes Zoster vaccine for shingles if you haven't already done so.
- Talk to your GP about making a plan for if you get sick with the flu, a cold, or other common infections or illnesses.
- Quit smoking. If you need help to quit, talk to your GP or pharmacist or call Quitline on 13 78 48.
- Having diabetes can affect your [mental wellbeing](#) too. There is support available. Speak to a friend, family member or your GP if you are having trouble coping with your diabetes or visit [Beyond Blue](#) which offers 24 hour support.



Annual Diabetes Cycle  
- Diabetes Australia



Tests and health checks  
- NDSS



Mental wellbeing  
- ACBRD



Beyond Blue

# Having a Medicines Review

## What to expect?



### Step 1

You, a family member, carer, nurse, pharmacist or your GP may suggest a Medicines Review.



### Step 2

If you and your GP agree to a Medicines Review, your GP will refer you to a credentialed pharmacist.



### Step 3

The pharmacist will contact you to organise a suitable time and place for the Medicines Review.



The review is usually conducted in your home. You can ask the pharmacist to wear a mask during the visit if it makes you more comfortable.



### Step 4

At the Medicines Review you and the pharmacist will spend time talking about your medicines. You can have a family member, friend or carer present.



### Step 5

After the review, the pharmacist will send your GP a report. This may include suggestions to change your medicines.



### Step 6

You will need to make a specific appointment with your GP to discuss the Medicines Review report and develop a written Medication Management Plan.

## Medicines Advice Initiative Australia (MAIA)

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Supporting quality use  
of medicines.