



Make time for the diabetes tests you need

No one likes to take tests (physical or otherwise); we get that. But if the tests can help you live your best life, aren't they worth it? If you have diabetes, several important routine tests can help you understand your health and manage it. And when your diabetes is controlled, it will help you avoid and delay other health problems.

Often, when the calendar shows it's time for these tests, you may look and feel just fine. That's great, but you need to have the tests anyway. Look at it like a tune-up for your car. Some issues may not have obvious signs. And if you routinely maintain your body (and your car), you can catch problems early and address them right away before they get costly.

If you have diabetes, working with your physician now may help you avoid or delay health problems.



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Living well with diabetes includes all of the following tests and measurements.

Ask your doctor which ones you need, and when:

- **A1C test** (at least two times a year; every three months if you can): This simple blood test shows how well you've controlled your blood sugar over the past three months. Usually, an A1C goal for people with diabetes is less than 7%.
- **Microalbumin test** (every year): This test measures the amount of protein in your urine. It shows how well your kidneys are working.
- **Creatinine** (at least once a year): This blood test also shows how well your kidneys are working.
- **Blood pressure** (every office visit): High blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Aim for a blood pressure level of less than 120/80.
- **Cholesterol** (every year): High cholesterol raises your risk for heart disease. It can also affect your circulation. Ideal cholesterol levels are:
 - Total cholesterol - below 200 mg/dL
 - LDL ("bad" cholesterol) - below 100 mg/dL
 - HDL ("good" cholesterol) - above 40 mg/dL for men; above 50 mg/dL for women
 - Triglycerides - below 150 mg/dL

Also have these health checks and shots done to keep your health at its best:

- **Flu** (every year) and **pneumonia shots**: Diabetes can affect your immune system. Protect yourself by getting an annual flu shot in October or November. Ask your doctor if a pneumonia shot can help you.
- **Dilated retinal eye exam** (every year): Diabetes can lead to vision problems. See your eye doctor once a year, even if your vision seems fine.
- **Foot exam** (every office visit): Diabetes can damage the nerves throughout your body, especially in your feet. Have the doctor check for sores on your feet at every visit. A thorough foot exam needs to be done at least once a year.
- **Dental exam** (two times a year): Because of higher blood glucose levels, people with diabetes have a higher risk of tooth or gum problems. Make sure to tell your dentist you have diabetes.

Managing your diabetes takes some work, but the long-term benefits are huge. Your primary care physician can help you set up a diabetes care plan that shows you when you need to have the tests and exams listed above. If you don't have a primary care physician, customer service can help you find one.



**To learn more about diabetes care, speak with your doctor or visit [empireblue.com](https://www.empireblue.com).
(Please register if you haven't yet.)**

Sources:
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute website: *Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure* (accessed January 2013); [nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov).
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Diabetes Public Health Resource* (accessed January 2013); [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

This information is meant to be educational. It should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please talk to your doctor about changes that may affect your health.

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