

## Diabetes Caregiver

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As a diabetes caregiver, you are able to provide support that may help the person you are caring for take better care of their diabetes. In doing so, you will help them avoid problems with diabetes. The support you provide may only be verbal or emotional, or you may be helping someone manage their diabetes 24 hours a day.

It is also important to communicate with the person you are caring for in order to determine what they need from you as a caregiver. Part of this communication will also involve listening to their complaints, fears, successes and anything else they might want to talk to you about. Finally, use your position as caregiver to be a model for a healthy lifestyle, such as by making a healthy diet and fitness a part of your life, as this will help the person with diabetes develop similar habits that are important for their health and diabetes management.

## Tips for caregivers

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### 1. Learn about diabetes

Whatever level of support you are providing, it is important to learn as much as you can about diabetes. Go to the MDwise INcontrol website at [MDwise.org/dm/diabetes](https://MDwise.org/dm/diabetes) to learn more about diabetes, including treatment options and complications of the disease.

### 2. Dealing with lows

Low blood sugar can be life threatening. Learn what causes it, how to recognize the symptoms and how to prevent and treat it.

### 3. Meal planning

Learning to prepare healthy, good tasting meals for the person you care for is an important part of their treatment. The good news is that the best choices for people with diabetes are also the best choices for the rest of the family.

### 4. Caring for your body

When someone has diabetes, it is important that they take extra good care of their body. Daily-self care routines for different parts of the body help the person you are caring for protect a healthy future with diabetes.

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## 5. Diabetes testing

There are several tests that a person with diabetes should have on a regular basis to help monitor their progress and overall health. Talk to the health care team about which follow-up exams are right for the person with diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends the following for people with diabetes:

Tests and Follow-Up Exams	How Often
A1C	2 to 4 times a year
Comprehensive dilated eye exam	Once a year
Foot exam	Every visit
Urine test for microalbuminuria	Once a year
Blood pressure	Every visit
Cholesterol and blood lipids	Once a year
Flu shot	Once a year
Pneumonia vaccine	Once; People under 65 who have a chronic illness or a weakened immune system should ask their doctor about getting another shot 5–10 years after their first one.

Sources: American Diabetes Association  
Eli Lilly and Company