You Can! Take the First Step
Diabetes Survival Skills
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Welcome

If you have diabetes, this booklet will teach you basic survival skills. These skills will help you until you come to a WellStar Diabetes Services class to learn more.

WellStar offers an outpatient program recognized by the American Diabetes Association. Our teaching staff of Certified Diabetes Educators includes registered nurses and registered dietitians. We also have a licensed social worker providing free social support when needed. Our class information is listed on page 26.

It is our goal to give you the highest quality care. We look forward to seeing you in a class soon.

What You Will Learn

After reading this booklet, you should be able to:

• List the main times when you should check your blood sugar
• List three signs of high and low blood sugar and how to care for each
• List the kinds of foods you should eat
• List the kinds of foods you should try to limit in your diet

It is very important for you to:

• Start going to a primary care doctor
• Sign up for your outpatient diabetes education classes
Your Healthcare Team

Doctor: ____________________________________________________________
Drugstore (Pharmacy): ______________________________________________
WellStar Diabetes Educator: ________________________________________

To sign up for a class:

Call WellStar Diabetes Services at 770-793-7828

Class Locations

WellStar Kennestone Hospital
WellStar Cobb Hospital
WellStar Douglas Hospital
WellStar Paulding Hospital
WellStar Windy Hill Hospital
WellStar Acworth Health Park
WellStar East Cobb Health Park
Definitions

Diabetes

• Diabetes is a lifelong condition.
• The cause is unknown.
• You have too much sugar in your blood.
• Your body is not able to use food the right way.
• You do not have enough insulin and/or your body does not use insulin the right way.
• Diabetes affects almost every part of your body.
• All types of diabetes are serious.

Glucose

• Glucose means sugar.
• Sometimes you will hear it called blood glucose or blood sugar. They both mean the same thing.
• Glucose comes from the food you eat.
• Your body gets its energy from glucose.
• Glucose is your body’s fuel.

Insulin

• Insulin is a hormone made in the pancreas.
• It helps the body use sugar for energy. Insulin lowers blood sugar by moving sugar out of the bloodstream into the cells of the body.
• You cannot live without insulin.
• When your body cannot make enough insulin, you may need to take manufactured insulin using a shot.
Types Of Diabetes

Type 1 Diabetes
This was once called juvenile diabetes. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin each day to live.

Type 1.5 Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults (LADA)
LADA is a slower progressing type 1 diabetes. It is often diagnosed as type 2. LADA is most common in those over age 35.

Type 2 Diabetes
This was once called adult-onset diabetes. In type 2 diabetes, the pancreas still makes some insulin. The body may not be able to use or make enough insulin for a normal blood sugar range. People with type 2 may be able to control diabetes with healthy eating and by staying active. They also may need to take pills, shots or both.

Gestational Diabetes
A small number of women have gestational diabetes during pregnancy. This often can be treated with a healthy meal plan and by staying active. Some women may need insulin or pills. Blood sugar often returns to normal levels after the baby is born. Women who have had gestational diabetes are at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Pre-Diabetes
With pre-diabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal. The levels are not high enough to be labeled diabetes. People with pre-diabetes are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes. With lifestyle changes, such as eating healthy foods and staying active, you may be able to bring your blood sugar level back to normal.
Care Of Diabetes

Education
WellStar offers group and one-on-one classes. Learning how to take care of your diabetes or pre-diabetes will help you feel better and prevent problems.

Meal Planning
The basics for healthy meal planning are learning how much, when and what to eat.

Staying Active
Regular exercise helps your body use insulin better and improves your overall health. Check with your doctor before starting or changing your exercise program.

Medicine
You may need to take pills, shots or both to control your diabetes.

Checking Your Sugar
Check your blood sugar regularly to help you know how your food, medicine and activity are affecting your diabetes. Write down your blood sugar levels in a logbook.
Goals

Why do I check my blood sugar?

• Blood sugar can be too high or too low.
• Uncontrolled blood sugar can lead to problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blood sugar goal without diabetes or pre-diabetes</th>
<th>Blood sugar goal with diabetes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Meals</td>
<td>Less than 100</td>
<td>80-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two hours after meals</td>
<td>Less than 140</td>
<td>Less than 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1C*</td>
<td>Less than 5.7</td>
<td>Less than 7**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A1C is your average blood sugar for the past two to three months.
** American Diabetes Association suggests an A1C of 7, which is an estimated average sugar of 154 mg/dL. Check with your doctor to see what is right for you.

Checking Your Blood Sugar

Keep a logbook of your blood sugar to take to your doctor’s office.

When To Test

□ Fasting (before breakfast) ____________________________
□ Two hours after meals ______________________________
□ Before meals _______________________________________
□ Bedtime ___________________________________________
□ Other ______________________________________________

You will use test strips and a blood sugar meter to check your blood sugar. Talk with your insurance company to see which meters and strips it will cover.
What Do The Numbers Mean?

Fasting

Less than 100  
Normal

100-125  
Pre-diabetes

126 or higher  
Diabetes

Two Hours After Meals

Less than 140  
Normal

140-199  
Pre-diabetes

200 or higher  
Diabetes

A1C

4.0 – 5.6  
Normal

5.7 – 6.4  
Pre-diabetes

6.5 and above  
Diabetes
**A1C**

A1C = Average blood sugar for the past two to three months  
eAG = Estimated average blood sugar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1C%</th>
<th>eAG mg/dl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>169</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>183</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High Blood Sugar (Hyperglycemia)

When blood sugar is too high, it is called hyperglycemia.

High blood sugar can be caused by:

- Skipping or taking the wrong amount or kind of medicine
- Overeating or not staying on your meal plan
- Not exercising
- Too much strenuous exercise at times
- Stress or sickness

How do you stop high blood sugar?

- Make sure to use the right kind and the right amount of medicine at the right time each day.
- Test your blood sugar regularly and keep a logbook.
- See a doctor when you are sick or have an infection.
- Do not eat too much.
- Do not exercise if your blood sugar is over 240 or you test positive for ketones. See page 20 for details about ketones.
- Your doctor should give you guidelines on when to call with high blood sugar.
Signs of High Blood Sugar

Early

• Sleepy
• Thirsty (dry mouth)
• Urinating (peeing) more often
• Blurred vision
• Itchy skin

Late

• Nausea (upset belly) or vomiting (throwing up)
• Belly cramps
• Fruity breath smell
• Flushed, hot skin
• Fast breathing
• Faint, blackout

Treatment

• Test your blood sugar.
• If your blood sugar is high—yet less than 240—try a brisk walk (if approved by your doctor) to help bring it down.
• Drink plenty of water unless it is limited by your doctor.
• If your blood sugar is over 240, test your urine for ketones. If positive, call your doctor and get approval before you exercise. See page 20 for details about ketones.
Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

When blood sugar is too low, it is called hypoglycemia. A blood sugar below 70 is thought of as low. People on insulin or diabetes pills called sulfonylureas are at higher risk for low blood sugar.

Hypoglycemia may happen for no clear reason. The most common causes include:

- Putting off or skipping a meal
- Too little food
- Too much activity without extra food
- Too much or the wrong kind of insulin or pills
- Drinking alcohol without food
- Stress or sickness

How do you stop low blood sugar?

Good diabetes control is the best prevention.

- Take the right amount and kind of insulin or pills at the right time
- Do not skip meals or snacks
- Eat every four to five hours
- Test your blood sugar often, mostly before and after exercise
- Try to match low blood sugar to peak action of insulin, exercise and eating
- Talk to your doctor about low blood sugar events
Signs of Low Blood Sugar

Early

- Sleepy
- Clammy, sweaty
- Tingling lips, dry mouth
- Dizzy, light-headed
- Fast heartbeat

- Headache
- Hungry
- Irritable, cranky
- Blurry vision
- Shaky

Late

- Weak
- Slurred speech
- Confused
- Clumsy

- Staggering
- Seizures
- Faint, blackout

Treatment

Warning signs can vary from person to person. Sometimes you may not feel any of the signs. Tell your family and friends what to watch for so they can help you right away. Sometimes the change from the early stage to the late stage is so fast that you may not have time to treat yourself.

Low blood sugar should be treated right away.

Never drive or take part in potentially dangerous activities when you think you may have low blood sugar.
Care of Low Blood Sugar

If you have any signs of low blood sugar, try to check right away. Even if you cannot test, start care anyway.

**The Rule of 15**

1. Check your blood sugar.
2. If lower than 70, or you have signs of low blood sugar, eat 15 grams of carbohydrates.
3. Wait 15 minutes. Check your blood sugar again.
4. If it is still less than 70, repeat steps 2 and 3.
5. Wait another 15 minutes.
6. If blood sugar is not going up, eat another 15 grams of carbs. Call your doctor or have someone take you to the emergency room.
7. Your blood sugar should be above 70 before you eat a meal or snack. Be sure to eat a meal or snack within 60 minutes of care.
8. Signs might continue. Do not overtreat or your blood sugar could go too high.

**15 Grams of Carbohydrates**

To eat 15 grams of carbohydrates, choose one of the following:

- 3-4 glucose tablets (best option)
- 1 tube of glucose gel
- 3-4 teaspoons of sugar
- 1/2 cup fruit juice
- 1/2 cup regular soft drink (not diet)
- Tablespoon of raisins

**If your blood sugar is 50 or below:**

- Eat 30 grams of carbs.
- Try to find the cause of your low blood sugar.
You may need to limit some foods to have good blood sugar control.

**Three major nutrients in food have calories:**

- Carbohydrates
- Protein
- Fat

Carbohydrates (carbs) have the greatest effect on your blood sugar. You do not have to eat to see a rise in your blood sugar, but eating carbs does make it go higher. Starches and sugars are the carbs that change blood sugar the most. Too much at one time can cause spikes in your blood sugar.

Carbs are vital parts of a diet and are needed for good health. They contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that you do not get from protein and fat. They are your major source of energy. Avoiding carbs can lower your energy level.

Keep your blood sugar in your goal range by eating small amounts of carbs throughout the day.
Food Tips

• Until you meet with a dietitian, limit: table sugar, agave, honey, syrup, jelly, sweet tea, sweetened coffee, sports drinks, cakes, pies, cookies, ice cream, candy, sweet rolls, fruit canned in syrup and regular gelatin.
• Do not drink regular soft drinks (soda).
• Limit fruit juice to 1/2 cup at a time.
• Instead of sugar, use sweeteners that do not have calories. Some examples are Sweet and Low®, Equal®, Splenda® and stevia products.
• “Sugar free” foods are not always the best choice. These foods may be sweetened with products that can raise blood sugar. They may still contain carbs.
• Do not skip meals.
• Try to eat at the same time each day.
• Eat more non-starchy vegetables.
• Choose whole grains.
• Bake, broil, boil or grill. Do not fry your food.
• Cut back on added fats, such as mayonnaise, butter, oil, margarine, gravy, salad dressing and nuts. Choose lower fat foods when eating out.
• To lose weight, eat less than you are eating now. Exercise also helps you lose weight.
Plan Your Plate

One half of your plate should be non-starchy vegetables, such as salad, green beans, broccoli, yellow squash or carrots.

One fourth of your plate will have starchy foods such as potato, corn, peas, beans, rice, pasta, rolls or bread.

Choose skinless chicken or turkey, lean beef or pork, fish, eggs or egg whites or low-fat cheese for one fourth of your plate.

At breakfast, most people don’t eat vegetables or as much meat. You may divide your plate into fourths, and fill with a starch, a meat or meat substitute, a fruit and a milk/dairy.
When You Are Sick

Sometimes you get sick, even when you are doing everything right. If this happens, you need to know how to care for your diabetes.

• Take your insulin or diabetes pills, unless your doctor has told you to stop.
• Check your blood sugar at least every four hours, especially before each meal and at bedtime.
• Drink at least 1/2 cup of caffeine-free fluid every 30 minutes.
• Sip water, diet soft drinks, broth or clear soup.
• If your blood sugar is low, you may need to drink fruit juice or regular soft drinks to give you some carbs.
• Take your temperature.
• Rest as much as possible.
• Check your urine for ketones.

Checking for Ketones

Ketones may appear in your blood and urine when you are sick or dehydrated. This is a serious health problem called diabetic ketoacidosis or DKA.

Most drugstores carry strips for testing ketones (some blood sugar meters also test using separate strips). Follow the directions on the strips package. Dip a ketone strip into your urine. Compare the color square at the end of the strip to the color guide on the package after the recommended time. Call your doctor if your strip is positive for ketones.
What Does Diabetes Do to My Body?

Over time, high blood sugars may lead to:

- Heart disease, heart attack or stroke
- Kidney disease
- Eye disease and/or blindness
- Nerve disease
- Foot problems and/or amputations
- Teeth and gum disease

Keeping track of these things can help prevent or delay problems:

- A1C
- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Eye health
- Foot health
- Serum creatinine (a check for how well your kidneys are working)
- Urine albumin excretion (a check for how well your kidneys are working)
What Should I Do to Take Care of Myself?

Your diabetes care team will help you, but day-to-day diabetes care is up to you. Do these things every day:

- Follow a healthy eating plan.
- Be physically active at least 30 minutes each day.
- Take your medicine like your doctor tells you to.
- Test your blood sugar. Write down your numbers.
- Check your feet for cuts, blisters, sores, swelling or redness.
- Brush and floss your teeth.
- Don’t smoke. Visit www.smokefree.gov if you need help quitting. You can also call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669).

Do these things at every doctor’s appointment:

- Show your doctor your blood sugar numbers.
- Check your weight.
- Ask for a copy of your most recent lab tests.
- Have your blood pressure checked.
- Have your feet checked.

Do these things at least once a year, or when your doctor tells you to:

- Have your A1C checked.
- Have a dilated eye exam.
- Have your urine checked for protein.
- Have your cholesterol and triglycerides checked.
- Get a flu shot.
- Visit your dentist (twice a year).
- Attend a diabetes class. To take a class at WellStar, call 770-793-7828.
Diabetes Pills

Some people can control their blood sugar with exercise and meal planning alone. Your doctor also may prescribe diabetes pills or insulin. See next page for more about insulin.

Pills are not insulin. They help your body control your blood sugar in many ways. Pills will only work if your body is still making some insulin.

Below are two frequently prescribed groups of diabetes pills.

• Metformin keeps the liver from letting extra sugar into the blood. It also helps the body use its own insulin better. It lowers the amount of sugar that the body takes in from food.
• Glipizide, glyburide and glimepiride help your body make more insulin and make your muscles more sensitive to insulin.

Be careful—some diabetes pills (and insulin) can make your blood sugar drop too low.
Insulin At Home

You may be on insulin while you are in the hospital. Your doctor may decide that you need to stay on insulin at home.

Basal-Bolus Insulin Therapy

Basal-bolus insulin therapy controls your blood sugar in two ways:

• Long-acting insulin (basal) keeps your blood sugar under control during the night and between meals
• Fast-acting insulin (bolus) before your meals keeps your blood sugar from going too high after you eat

Syringe Disposal

You will use a syringe to give yourself an insulin shot. Your used syringe is medical waste. After one use, place the whole syringe in a heavy-duty plastic bottle with a screw cap. Use a container you cannot see through. Do not use a container that can be pierced by the needle.

Be sure the cap is tightly closed and taped before throwing away. Label the container, “Do not recycle.”
# Types of Insulin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Onset</th>
<th>Peak</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapid-Acting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humalog™ (lispro)</td>
<td>Less than 15 min.</td>
<td>30-90 min.</td>
<td>3-5 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novolog™ (aspart)</td>
<td>10-20 min.</td>
<td>40-50 min.</td>
<td>3-5 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apidra™ (glulisine)</td>
<td>20-30 min.</td>
<td>30-90 min.</td>
<td>1-2½ hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-Acting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>30 min.-1 hr.</td>
<td>2-5 hr.</td>
<td>5-8 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate-Acting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPH (N)</td>
<td>1-2 hr.</td>
<td>4-12 hr.</td>
<td>10-18 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humulin N™</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novolin N™</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Acting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lantus™ (glargine)</td>
<td>1-2 hr.</td>
<td>No peak</td>
<td>20-24 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levemir™ (detemir)</td>
<td>1-2 hr.</td>
<td>Fairly flat</td>
<td>Up to 24 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Mixed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humulin 70/30</td>
<td>30 min.-1 hr.</td>
<td>2-10 hr.</td>
<td>10-18 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novolin 70/30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humalog 70/30</td>
<td>Less than 15 min.</td>
<td>1-2 hr.</td>
<td>10-18 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humalog 75/25</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Humalog 50/50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## My Insulin

The name(s) of my insulin is (are) ________________________________

If you take a mixed dose of insulin twice a day, space them 10-12 hours apart.
The times at which I take my insulin are:

___________________________ a.m. and  ________________________  p.m.
Insulin Tips

• Very high or low temperatures can damage insulin. Do not put your insulin in the freezer, a hot car or direct sunlight.
• Check the expiration date on your insulin.
• After opening, insulin loses its strength after 28 days.
• After mixing regular insulin with intermediate-acting insulin, inject it immediately before a meal.
• For cloudy insulin: Gently roll the vial between hands to mix.
• For clear insulin: Do not use if it is cloudy and has particles in it.
• When mixing two types of insulin, always draw clear regular insulin into the syringe first (“clear before cloudy”).
• Do not mistake the long-acting insulin with short- or rapid-acting insulin. They are all clear.
• Do not shake Lantus®.
• Do not mix Lantus® or Levemir® with any other insulin.
• Apidra™ can be mixed with NPH unless it is used in an insulin pump.
Places to Give Shots

• Inject the insulin at least one inch from scars, tattoos or navel (belly button).
• Rotate the injection site within one area of the body for at least a week or two.

Medicine Reminders

• Record your dose and place of the shot in your blood sugar logbook.
• Take your medication at the same time each day.
• Do not skip or change your medication without talking with your doctor.
Use these Zones to manage your diabetes. Talk to your doctor about how to stay in the Green Zone. Need more information? Refer to WellStar’s booklet, “Diabetes Survival Skills,” information on checking your blood sugar, eating healthy, staying active and more!

**Every Day Checklist:**
- ✓ Check your blood sugars and record them
- ✓ Take your medicine on time
- ✓ Plan your meals
- ✓ Stay active

**GREEN ZONE**

**GO! I’m doing well. My blood sugars are under control.**

- My fasting and/or pre-meal blood sugars are 80-130.
- My blood sugars two hours after eating are less than 180.
- My A1C is 7 or under.

Continue the “Every Day Checklist” above.

**YELLOW ZONE**

**CAUTION: My blood sugars are getting out of control.**

- My fasting and/or pre-meal blood sugars are 130-160, or I have signs of high blood sugar (very thirsty, urinating more often than usual or blurry vision)
- My blood sugars two hours after eating are 180-240.
- I have had one low blood sugar (less than 70) in one day or one week, or I have had signs of low blood sugar (weakness, shaky, sweaty or confused).

Be sure you are following the “Every Day Checklist” above. Work with your healthcare team to get back to the GREEN ZONE.

**RED ZONE**

**STOP! My blood sugars are out of control.**

- Most of my fasting and/or pre-meal blood sugars are over 160.
- Most of my blood sugars two hours after eating are over 240.
- I have had more than one low blood sugar (less than 70) in one day or one week, or signs of low blood sugar.

Immediately call your doctor.

IMPORTANT: Blood sugar levels below 70 or above 240 may mean a serious medical condition. If you have slurred speech, seizure, black out, fruity breath smell, trouble breathing and/or uncontrolled vomiting, seek immediate medical attention.

Treat high or low blood sugar with treatment options from next page. >>
Diabetes Zones

Blood sugar targets vary from person to person. They can even vary in the same person over time. You and your doctor should work together to decide what your target blood sugar range should be. Call your nurse or doctor if you have repeated patterns of highs and/or lows, or symptoms of highs and lows.

How should I treat high blood sugar?

- If your blood sugar is high—but less than 240—try a brisk walk (if approved by your doctor) to help bring it down.
- Drink plenty of water, unless it is limited by your doctor.

How should I treat low blood sugar?

Treat it before you do anything else.

- Eat 3-4 glucose tablets or drink ½ cup fruit juice.
- Wait 15 minutes.
- Recheck your sugar.
- If it is over 70, have a snack or meal to prevent another low blood sugar.
- If it is still under 70, repeat the treatment. If it does not come up after two treatments, call your doctor.
- Never drive with a low blood sugar.

Call your nurse or doctor if you have repeated patterns of highs and/or lows, or if symptoms persist.

Nurse or Doctor’s Name: __________________________________________________________

Number: _________________________________________________________________________

Things to remember after talking to my nurse or doctor:

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________
Where Can I Go For Help?

**Sign up for a class**
Ask your doctor for an order for diabetes classes.
Call WellStar Diabetes Services at **770-793-7828** to register.

**Comprehensive Diabetes Management Program**
You can! Control Your Diabetes
You can! Enjoy Eating with Diabetes
You can! Live Well with Diabetes

**Annual Update:** For comprehensive program graduates
You can! Continue Your Journey

**Pre-diabetes:** For people at risk for diabetes
You can! Prevent Diabetes

**Gestational Diabetes:** For women with pre-existing or recently diagnosed diabetes during pregnancy
You can! Have a Healthy Pregnancy with Diabetes

**Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT):** Up to three hours of individual nutrition counseling with a dietitian

**Advanced Carbohydrate Counting:** For people on meal-time insulin

**Injectable Medications:** For people on insulin or non-insulin injectable diabetes medicines

**Weight Management:** 10-week program for people with diabetes and pre-diabetes
You can! Manage Your Weight

**Support Group:** Free monthly meeting at several sites
Additional Resources

American Diabetes Association
1-800-DIABETES / 1-800-342-2383
www.diabetes.org

Diabetes Association of Atlanta
Assistance with supplies: 404-527-7150
http://diabetesatlanta.org
References


