



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Illinois**

# Commit to Managing Your Diabetes



Type 1 diabetes is a sickness that happens when a person's pancreas stops making insulin. Insulin is the hormone that controls blood-sugar levels. Type 1 is different from Type 2 diabetes in that children, teens and young adults get it most often.

With Type 1 diabetes, the body attacks itself by mistake. It destroys the cells that make insulin. This can go on for months or years before any signs start to appear.

If you have Type 1 diabetes, it's important to make a commitment to be as healthy as you can be by:

- Learning about your sickness
- Taking your medications as your doctor tells you
- Getting a yearly diabetes physical and eye exam
- Keeping your immunizations up to date
- Choosing healthy foods
- Staying active
- Wearing a tag or bracelet that says you have diabetes
- Keeping a glucose kit nearby in case you have a low blood sugar emergency

Diabetes is managed mostly by you. But you need support from your health care team. Your primary care doctor, foot doctor, dentist, eye doctor, dietitian and pharmacist are all part of your team. It should also involve family and other people close to you.



## Committing to keep yourself healthy is a great first step in taking charge of your diabetes.

There are other things you can do to stay well:

- Take special care of your feet. Wash them daily in warm water. Be sure to dry them fully and moisturize. If you get sores or other problems that don't heal, see your doctor.
- Keep your blood sugar levels as close to goal as possible to help stop or slow complications.
- Watch your blood pressure and cholesterol. If healthy eating and exercise aren't doing enough, you might need to add medication.
- If you smoke, quit. Smoking raises your chance of complications. Smokers with diabetes are three times more likely to die than non-smokers with the sickness.
- Drink alcohol responsibly. Only drink with a meal. And check your blood sugar levels before you go to bed.

Managing your diabetes means controlling your blood sugar and insulin, getting enough exercise and making sure to eat healthy foods. With support from a strong health care team, people with diabetes often live long, healthy lives.