YOUR DIABETES HEALTHCARE TEAM AND YOU

You may have heard the saying “it takes a village to raise a child.” Well, when it comes to staying healthy while living with diabetes, that idea of team support is very true. While you will always be the most valuable player on your healthcare team, you can find support from many other people who want to help you stay in the best health. Let’s meet the team on the next few pages.

- Primary Care Provider (PCP) or Family Doctor and Staff
- Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES)
- Nutrition Professional
- Endocrinologist
- Cardiologist
- Nephrologist
- Eye Doctor
- Podiatrist
- Dentist
- Pharmacist
- Mental Health Professional
- Fitness Professional
- Case Manager
- Friends and Family
- YOU!
Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or Family Doctor and Staff

Your primary care provider (PCP) or family doctor is the person you and your family see on a regular basis to help manage your diabetes and for general health checkups. This person may also help you manage other conditions you may have.¹

Your doctor’s office may include other professionals such as nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and physician assistants. These healthcare team members can also help you manage your diabetes.

Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES)

A Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES) is a teacher in many aspects of diabetes care. They can help you figure out how to manage the things you need to do to take care of your diabetes, in a way that fits with your daily life, routines, environment, and family dynamics.¹ Your family doctor or insurance company may be able to refer you to a CDCES if needed.

How they may help you stay healthy

Your PCP is often the first person you will go to with questions about your diabetes and health. Your PCP may also refer you to specialists and other healthcare team members for specific health goals.¹

How they may help you stay healthy

Your CDCES can help you understand some of the steps you can take every day to stay in good health. They can also help you understand how to check your blood sugar and recognize the symptoms of high and low blood sugar (glucose). They can also help with other day-to-day diabetes-management tips. It’s important to work with your CDCES to be ready for challenges that can impact your daily health care.
Your nutrition professional can help customize the best nutrition plan based on your desired weight, medication, lifestyle, and other health goals.\(^1\)

**Endocrinologist**

An endocrinologist is a doctor who specializes in treating conditions like diabetes that affect the endocrine system. The endocrine system is made up of glands that produce hormones that help control the way the body works. Because diabetes is a disease related to how your body produces and uses the hormone insulin, proper diabetes care falls within the specialty of endocrinology.\(^1\)\(^2\)

If you are having trouble keeping your diabetes under control, your family doctor may refer you to an endocrinologist. People with diabetes who are struggling to meet their goals or who may be at increased risk for developing complications often consult an endocrinologist.\(^1\)
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Cardiologist
A cardiologist is a heart doctor. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) negatively impacts the heart and blood vessels. People living with diabetes are twice as likely to have CVD or a stroke than people without diabetes.³

How they may help you stay healthy
A cardiologist is dedicated to your heart wellness. They can help you manage your diabetes to reduce your risk of getting CVD and the complications that come with it.³

Nephrologist
A nephrologist is a kidney doctor. Diabetes can damage the kidneys and cause them to lose their ability to filter out waste products from the blood. High levels of blood sugar make extra work for the kidneys, which can cause the filtering system to break down.⁴

How they may help you stay healthy
If your kidneys aren’t working well, your family doctor may refer you to a nephrologist. They can help you with a treatment plan based on the health of your kidneys.
Because diabetes can potentially damage the tiny blood vessels in your eyes, it’s important you see an eye doctor who has experience with diabetic eye disease.1,5 Your eye doctor is trained to treat your eyes or refer you to a specialist who can help further.

### Eye Doctor

You will want to see your eye doctor at least once a year. It is important to have a dilated eye exam each year. Your eye doctor may be an ophthalmologist or optometrist.1 He or she will check your vision and monitor whether there have been any changes in your eyes.

### Podiatrist

A podiatrist is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating feet and problems of the lower legs.1

### How they may help you stay healthy

**Eye Doctor**

Because diabetes can potentially damage the tiny blood vessels in your eyes, it’s important you see an eye doctor who has experience with diabetic eye disease.1,5 Your eye doctor is trained to treat your eyes or refer you to a specialist who can help further.

**Podiatrist**

Having diabetes may raise your risk of poor blood flow and nerve damage in your lower legs and feet. This may mean you get infections more often. Any foot sores or calluses should be checked by your primary care physician or podiatrist. As a specialist, your podiatrist can help recognize any complications and help make sure they don’t become more serious.1
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Dentist
A dentist is a doctor who specializes in care of the teeth and gums. Working closely with your dentist every 6 months can help you make sure your teeth and gums stay healthy.

How they may help you stay healthy
Having diabetes means you have a greater risk for gum disease. Working closely with your dentist can help you make sure your teeth and gums stay healthy.

Pharmacist
Pharmacists are responsible for dispensing the medicines your doctor prescribes. He or she can also provide more information on how your medication works. A pharmacist is responsible for letting you know about potential side effects any medication you take may have.

How they may help you stay healthy
A pharmacist understands how your medications affect your body. This means your pharmacist is a very good resource to help you understand how any medications you may take will affect your blood sugar levels.
Mental Health Professional

There are many different types of people who can be considered mental health professionals. These include social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, marriage counselors, or family mental health professionals. All of these professionals have one goal in mind—to help you stay in good mental health.1

How they may help you stay healthy

Mental health professionals are trained to help you through the personal and emotional side of living with diabetes.7 They are there to offer you advice if you are feeling depressed or stressed.

Fitness Professional

A physical activity specialist may be an exercise physiologist, personal trainer, or physical therapist. These professionals can help you find exercises that are safe for you, and ensure you get the most out of your exercise program. Be sure to work with a fitness professional who understands diabetes and the medicine and insulin you are taking that may affect your blood glucose.1,8

How they may help you stay healthy

It’s very important to be active and eat right to help manage your diabetes and stay in good health. A fitness professional can help you find the right exercises. This includes exercises to help improve your blood sugar and cholesterol levels, reduce stress, and improve your overall fitness level. Remember to always consult with your primary care provider before beginning any exercise program.1,8
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Case Manager
A case manager may work for your health plan. A case manager can help plan and coordinate your health care with your family doctor and the other members of your diabetes team, such as a CDCES, nutrition professional, or endocrinologist.9

How they may help you stay healthy
A case manager helps make sure you have access to quality care to help you manage your diabetes and any other conditions. Your case manager can help you stick with your medication treatment plan. This may help you manage your diabetes and the other health problems that may occur if your blood sugar stays too high.9

Friends and Family
Your support network isn’t limited to healthcare team members. You can also find support from your friends and family to help you stay in good health.

How they may help you stay healthy
Your friends and family can help you to stay in good health and can help keep you motivated.10 Talk openly about your diabetes. See if they will help support you in maintaining a healthy lifestyle such as exercising or eating well with you.
CarePath Healthy Engagements is a comprehensive program designed to help improve the lives of people living with type 2 diabetes and assist those that care for them. CarePathHealthyEngagements.com

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