



"Hands on Country" was painted for Diabetes Australia-NSW by artist, Chris Tobin, a Dharug man.

Diabetes: it's in my hands



10 ways to manage diabetes

High blood glucose (sugar) levels can lead to complications (health problems). These complications affect your eyes, kidneys, feet, blood vessels, nerves and heart. The following ways can help you to manage your diabetes and stay healthy.

1. Find out all you can about diabetes.

Diabetes is in your hands, however there are a lot of people to help you with your diabetes. Your health worker can help you and point you in the right direction. Make sure you make and keep appointments with your doctor and other health professionals.

Who you might need to see	What they can do for you
Doctor	Check your health, order tests, give you scripts
Dietitian	Help you to learn about good tucker
Diabetes Educator	Help you to learn about diabetes, blood glucose meters (machines used for testing your blood glucose), your tablets, insulin and other things
Podiatrist	Check your feet and show you how to look after them
Optometrist or Ophthalmologist	Check your eyes
Specialists	If you are having troubles with your diabetes or need extra help with your kidneys, eyes, heart, feet or blood pressure

2. Eat healthy foods.

These should be low fat, high fibre and low in added sugar. Include vegetables, fruit, wholegrain breads and cereals. Also eat some low fat dairy products and lean meat. Drink lots of water.

3. Be active every day.

Try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. Ride a bike, play with the kids, walk and have a yarn with your friends. You can do three lots of 10 minutes a day if that is easier.

4. Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor.

These help your body to keep your blood glucose levels (BGL) in target range. Your medications may be either tablets or insulin injections. You might need blood pressure or cholesterol tablets as well.

5. Check your blood glucose levels (BGL).

Check them yourself or ask your health worker to check them as often as you can. Checking your own blood glucose level (BGL) can help you to make good choices with eating and exercising, as well as showing you what else can change your BGL. Make sure you have an NDSS card to get cheaper prices on your test strips. NDSS registration is free and organised by your GP.

BGL target range

- 4–6 mmol/L before meals
- less than 8 mmol/L two hours after meals

What can change your BGL

- food
- activity
- medications
- illness/pain/infection
- stress/worry
- drugs/alcohol

6. Check your feet every day.

You can stop foot problems by checking your feet on the top, bottom and between your toes. Look for dryness, blisters, hard areas of skin, redness, swelling, cuts, bites or pus. If you can't see or reach your feet, ask someone else to check them or use a mirror. Shake out your shoes before putting them on and don't go barefoot. Tell your health worker if you have problems with your feet.

7. If you smoke: STOP.

Smoking worsens the complications of diabetes and every cigarette is causing you damage. Speak with your health worker, doctor or call the Quitline on 137 848 for help and advice.

8. Have regular blood tests.

Your doctor, educator or health worker will tell you about tests for your diabetes.

9. Have your blood pressure checked.

Many people with diabetes have blood pressure problems. This can be checked when you see your health worker, educator or doctor, or at least every six months. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Blood pressure should be less than 130/80. For people with kidney disease the target is 125/75.

10. Have your eyes checked.

Have a special eye test when you first find out about your diabetes. An optometrist can do this test. This test should be done at least every one to two years, more often if there are problems in the eye.

All of these things can help you to live well with diabetes.

Health Worker or AMS - Phone:

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Diabetes Educator - Phone:

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Dietitian - Phone:

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Doctor - Phone:

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Diabetes Australia-NSW:

Phone: **1300 136 588**

Websites: www.diabetesnsw.com.au

www.diabeteskidsandteens.com.au

www.diabeteschannel.com.au

www.diabetesdirect.com.au

Test	What it checks	How often it is done
HbA1c (blood test)	Your average BGL over the previous 3 months	Every 3–6 months
Cholesterol (blood test)	Blood fat levels	At least once a year
Microalbumin (urine test)	Early test for kidney problems	At least once a year