

Frequently Asked Questions

When do I need to provide new Confirmation Forms?

Submit a new Confirmation Form EACH TIME you update a test/exam.

What if I have more than one doctor managing my diabetes?

Simply provide a separate copy of the Provider Confirmation Form to each of your doctors, and have them complete those items they can. Each physician will then need to fax their own signed copy of this form to us. You can also have the laboratory where your blood work is done complete the laboratory items on the Provider Confirmation Form and fax this to us.

What is a Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) and why is it important?

A hemoglobin A1c test, also called an HbA1c, is a test that measures a person's average blood sugar (glucose) level over the past 2 to 3 months. Aim for an A1c result of 7% or lower unless told otherwise by your physicians.

To be eligible for rewards in the **Good Health Gateway® Diabetes Care Rewards Program**, you must have your HbA1c measured at least twice a year (or provide documentation from your physician every 6 months that you do not need this test).

Why do I need to have a foot exam?

Over time, high blood sugar affects nerves and blood vessels. Nerve damage from diabetes can cause you to lose feeling in your feet. As a result, you may not feel a cut, a blister or a sore. Damage to the blood vessels can also mean that your feet do not get enough blood and oxygen. It then becomes harder for your foot to heal if you do get a sore or infection.

A foot exam can often be performed by your regular physician(s), but may require to be done by a podiatrist (foot doctor) if recommended by your doctors. To be eligible for rewards through the **Good Health Gateway® Diabetes Care Rewards Program**, be sure to have your foot exam at least once per year (or provide documentation from your physician every year that you do not need this exam).

What can I do to take proper care of my feet between foot exams?

Look for cuts, cracks, sores, red spots, swelling, infected toenails, splinters, blisters, and calluses on the feet each day. Call your doctor if such wounds do not heal after one day. If you have corns and calluses,

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ask your doctor or podiatrist about the best way to care for them. Wash your feet in warm—not hot—water and dry them well. Cut your toenails once a week or when needed. Cut toenails when they are soft from washing. Cut them to the shape of the toe and not too short. File the edges with an emery board. Rub lotion on the tops and bottoms of feet—but not between the toes—to prevent cracking and drying. Wear shoes that fit well. Always wear shoes or slippers, because when you are barefoot it is easy to step on something and hurt your feet. Protect your feet from extreme heat and cold.

Why do I need to have an eye exam?

Because diabetes eye disease may develop without symptoms, regular eye exams are important for finding problems early when treatment can be most effective. If you're having trouble reading, if your vision is blurred, or if you're seeing rings around lights, dark spots, or flashing lights, you may have eye problems related to your diabetes and need to call your eye doctor immediately.

To be eligible for rewards through the **Good Health Gateway® Diabetes Care Rewards Program**, be sure to have your eyes examined at least once per year (or provide documentation from your physician every year that you do not need this exam).

What is a dilated eye exam?

It is best to have an eye doctor give you a dilated eye exam at least once a year. The doctor will use eye drops to enlarge (dilate) your pupils to examine the backs of your eyes. Your eyes will be checked for signs of cataracts or glaucoma, problems that people with diabetes are more likely to get.

How does diabetes affect how I respond to a cold or a flu?

Being sick by itself can raise your blood glucose. Moreover, illness can prevent you from eating properly, which further affects blood glucose.

In addition, the high blood sugar levels of uncontrolled diabetes can make the immune system more vulnerable to severe cases of the flu and pneumonia. People with diabetes who come down with the flu or pneumonia may become very sick and may even have to go to a hospital. You can help keep yourself from getting the flu by getting a flu shot every year and a pneumonia shot every ten years. Discuss with your doctor the need for the flu and pneumonia shots.

Why do I need to have an annual blood lipid profile (cholesterol and triglycerides)?

People with uncontrolled diabetes have high rates of cholesterol and triglyceride abnormalities and high blood pressure, all of which are major contributors to higher rates of cardiovascular disease (heart disease). Having an annual check-up of your cholesterol and triglycerides, and regular blood pressure monitoring, will help detect problems early when they can be most effectively treated and ensure any difficulties you have are being actively treated.

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To be eligible for rewards through the **Good Health Gateway® Diabetes Care Rewards Program**, you must have a fasting blood lipid profile check at least once a year (or provide documentation from your physician every year that you do not need this test). See your doctor for a laboratory order for this important blood work-up.

Why do I need to have my urine/protein levels measured?

There's a lot you can do to prevent kidney problems. Controlling your blood glucose can prevent or delay the onset of kidney disease. Keeping your blood pressure under control is also important. Go to the doctor if you develop a bladder or kidney infection; symptoms include cloudy or bloody urine, pain or burning when you urinate, an urgent need to urinate often, back pain, chills, or fever. Remember: Take all of any antibiotic prescription when treating an infection, and drink extra calorie-free fluids.

The incidence of kidney failure caused by diabetes is rising. In diabetes kidney disease (also called diabetic nephropathy), cells and blood vessels in the kidneys are damaged from years of high blood sugars, affecting the organs' ability to filter out waste.

Diabetes kidney disease happens slowly and silently, so you might not feel that anything is wrong until severe problems have developed. Therefore, it is important to get your blood and urine checked for kidney problems each year.

To be eligible for rewards through the **Good Health Gateway® Diabetes Care Rewards Program**, you must have your urine tested for protein levels at least once a year (or provide documentation from your physician every year that you do not need this test). See your doctor for a laboratory order for this important blood work-up.

Where can I get more information about my diabetes?

Your doctor or other health care provider is a good source of information about your diabetes. In addition, you can discuss your diabetes with your health plan's case manager or health coach. Other good sources of information can be found by clicking on the **Tools & Resources** link on the **GoodHealthGateway.com** website.