Heart Foundation

My diabetes and heart health action plan

Did you know? Looking after your diabetes can help protect your heart.

There are many practical steps you can take to support both your diabetes management and heart health.

Use this action plan to help you make simple changes to manage your diabetes and reduce your risk of heart disease. It all begins with creating a plan that is easy to follow and makes sense for you and your circumstances.

Forming new habits can take time, so you don't need to rush. Begin with small, achievable steps over the next three to six months and build on them gradually. Every positive step can help support your diabetes management and heart health.

Need support? You can work through this plan with a member of your healthcare team, such as your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or diabetes educator.

Let's get started

1. **Select the change you want to start with**
2. **Decide what this change will look like for you**
3. **Create a plan for change**

   Things to consider:

   - Do I know enough to get started? Where can I find more information to help me with my changes?
   - When will I start this change?
   - How often (what day and time) will I do this each week?
   - Do I need to buy anything to help me make this change?
   - What is hard about starting and keeping up these changes? How can I tackle these to set myself up for success?

Your why

Knowing your values and how they fit with your health goals can help you find purpose and make lasting change. Think about your values and what is important to you. How do they affect why you want to make these changes?

My values	My why
Family and friends	
Staying independent and mobile	
Personal achievement	
Mental health and wellbeing	
Other:	

As well as building healthy habits, it's important to:

Take your diabetes medicines (if prescribed by your doctor).

Attend regular diabetes check ups, including health checks for your eyes, feet and kidneys.

Work with your healthcare team to manage your ABCs:

A = HbA1c (blood glucose)
B = Blood pressure
C = Cholesterol

Talk to your GP about having a Heart Health Check to further understand your risk of developing heart disease.

My next appointment with my GP: Date _____ Time _____

My plan for change

Manage my blood glucose

1 Select the change you want to start with:
(Select one or more)

- ☐ Manage my blood glucose levels
- ☐ See a diabetes educator for ongoing support with my diabetes

2 Decide what this change will look like for you:
(Select one or more)

- ☐ Check my blood glucose as recommended
- ☐ Ask my doctor when I should have my next HbA1c test
- ☐ Keep a record of my most recent HbA1c
- ☐ Take my diabetes medicines as prescribed
  (tip: set a reminder on your phone)
- ☐ Speak to my healthcare team if I'm unsure or having difficulty managing my diabetes
- ☐ Review my diabetes management plan
- ☐ Learn more about my diabetes by visiting Diabetes Australia
- ☐ Book in regular appointments with a diabetes educator
- ☐ Other: _____

3 My plan for change:

Most recent HbA1c: _____ Target HbA1c: _____

My plan for change



Follow a heart-healthy eating pattern that supports my diabetes management

1 Select the change you want to start with:

(Select one or more)

- ☐ Follow a heart-healthy eating pattern
- ☐ Speak to my doctor about seeing an Accredited Practising Dietitian

2 Decide what this change will look like for you:

(Select one or more)

- ☐ Choosing heart-healthy oils and spreads
  e.g. olive, canola, and sunflower oil, avocado, nuts and seeds, and spreads made from these ingredients
- ☐ Choosing unflavoured dairy options
  e.g. unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese
- ☐ Including a variety of fruit and vegetables, including fresh, frozen and canned varieties (no added salt, no added sugar; in juice, not syrup)
- ☐ Including a variety of healthy protein sources
  e.g. fish and seafood, legumes (beans and lentils), nuts and seeds, poultry, eggs (up to 7 per week), and lean meat (limit red meat to 1-3 times a week)
- ☐ Choosing high-fibre, lower GI wholegrains (bread, pasta, rice and cereals) and spreading these across the day
- ☐ Choosing lower-salt foods and flavouring meals with herbs, spices, lemon or vinegar instead of adding salt
- ☐ Choosing water as my main drink and limiting sugary drinks
  e.g. soft drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks and large serves of juice.
- ☐ Asking my doctor about how I can access a dietitian *e.g. GP Chronic Condition Management Plan*

3 My plan for change:

My plan for change

Move more

1 Select the change you want to start with:
(Select one or more)

Start with 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity:

- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ Three times a week
- ☐ Four or more times a week

2 Decide what this change will look like for you:
(Select one or more)

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Bike riding
- ☐ Joining an exercise class
- ☐ Other: _____

Aim to complete 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity on most days of the week. Aim for at least 2.5 hours per week.

- ☐ Do muscle strengthening activities two or more times a week

- ☐ Adding bodyweight exercises to my routine
  e.g. squats, lunges, modified push ups
- ☐ Adding resistance bands/light weights to my exercises
- ☐ Strength class with instructor
- ☐ Pilates or yoga
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Do functional activities (mobility, balance and coordination) three or more times per week

- ☐ Balance exercises at home
- ☐ Pilates or yoga
- ☐ Balance and/or strength class with instructor
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Increase incidental exercise (any everyday movement built up in small amounts throughout the day)

- ☐ Parking further away from the shops
- ☐ Hanging laundry on the washing line
- ☐ Walking or bike riding short distances instead of driving
- ☐ Taking the stairs when possible
- ☐ Pairing talking with walking
  e.g. meetings, phone calls, catch ups
- ☐ Other: _____

3 My plan for change:

My plan for change

Quit smoking and/or vaping

1 Select the change you want to start with:
(Select one or more)

- ☐ Quit smoking
- ☐ Quit vaping

2 Decide what this change will look like for you:
(Select one or more)

- ☐ Speaking to my GP about ways to quit, including smoking/vaping cessation tools *(e.g. nicotine replacement therapy)*
- ☐ Seeking support from Quit or iCanQuit
- ☐ Calling Quitline (13 7848) to speak with a qualified counsellor
- ☐ Other: _____

3 My plan for change:

Other

1 Enter the change you want to start with:

- ☐

2 Decide what this change will look like for you:
(Select one or more)

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

3 My plan for change:

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