

# Education is essential for optimal diabetes health

November 28 2017, by Laura Hieronymus

---

When you have diabetes, you are certainly not alone. Diabetes is one of the most common chronic conditions affecting over 30 million people in the U.S. About 5 percent of people with diabetes have type 1. Type 2 diabetes is more common and occurs in approximately 95 percent of those with diabetes. If you are a woman with a history of gestational diabetes during pregnancy, your risk of developing type 2 diabetes as you age is 40 percent to 60 percent and increases to 50 percent to 75 percent, if you are obese.

Prior to developing type 2 diabetes, prediabetes often occurs. Prediabetes is when [blood glucose levels](#) are higher than normal but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis. Experts estimate that about 84 million people 18 or older have prediabetes.

## Self-Management

Self-management is actively managing your chronic illness. Regardless of the type of diabetes you have, you will self-manage about 95 percent of your care. Education and support from diabetes educators is essential to develop skills and confidence to manage your diabetes. Not only should you be well-educated about your diabetes when you are diagnosed, you should be educated yearly specific to your treatment goals and to help prevent complications.

When challenges to your usual level of activity, ability to function,

[health](#) beliefs, and/or well-being occur, diabetes self-management education and support can help you adapt. Also, whenever factors complicate self-management, such as other health issues, aging, or pregnancy, additional diabetes education is usually necessary.

## Standards

Do research to find services available for your diabetes self-management education. Check to see if the services are either accredited by the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) or recognized by the American Diabetes Association (ADA). If you have prediabetes, look for a Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) that has achieved Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognition.

## Skills

Lifelong skills, as well as ongoing decision-making support, are necessary to self-manage diabetes. The AADE has developed seven key skills to focus on for optimal diabetes health; they are healthy eating, being active, monitoring, taking medication, problem solving, reducing risks and healthy coping. The DPP will help you develop necessary lifestyle skills to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

## Support

In addition to your diabetes care team, ideally you will have diabetes support from family and friends. Lay health and community health workers, who are not diabetes educators, may also be instrumental in reinforcing elements of your diabetes treatment plan as well as offering emotional support. Your [support](#) system should also encourage follow up on a routine basis with your diabetes care team and consultation with the team should a question or need arise.

## Success

If you have diabetes—get a referral for diabetes self-management education. Likewise, if you have prediabetes, ask your health care provider for a referral to a DPP. Take charge, be proactive and seek diabetes education-related services to optimize your [diabetes](#) health.

Provided by University of Kentucky

Citation: Education is essential for optimal diabetes health (2017, November 28) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-11-essential-optimal-diabetes-health.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.