

# MANAGING YOUR DIABETES

Diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy.

Most of the food you eat is broken down into sugar (also called glucose) and released into your bloodstream. When your blood sugar goes up, it signals your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy.

If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it makes as well as it should. When there isn't enough insulin or cells stop responding to insulin, too much blood sugar stays in your bloodstream. Over time, that can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease.

There isn't a cure yet for diabetes, but losing weight, eating healthy food, and being active can really help. Taking medicine as needed, getting diabetes self-management education and support, and keeping health care appointments can also reduce the impact of diabetes on your life.

There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant).

Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake) that stops your body from making insulin. Approximately 5-10% of the people who have diabetes have type 1.

With type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels. About 90-95% of people with diabetes have type 2.

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. If you have gestational diabetes, your baby could be at higher risk for health problems.

Gestational diabetes usually goes away after your baby is born but increases your risk for type 2 diabetes later in life.

If you have diabetes, managing your blood sugar is part of your daily schedule. How often you check your blood sugar depends on the type of diabetes you have and if you take any diabetes medicines.

For Medicare-Eligible Retirees covered under the NYCDCC Welfare Fund, UnitedHealthcare ("UHC") provides coverage for diabetes glucose meters and testing strips under the Preferred Diabetic Supply Program.

The program provides the following OneTouch® and Accu-Chek® items at a \$0 cost share to Medicare-Eligible Retirees:

## Glucose meters:

- OneTouch Verio Flex®
- OneTouch Verio Reflect®
- Accu-Chek® Guide Me
- Accu-Chek® Guide

## Test strips:

- OneTouch Verio®
- OneTouch Ultra®
- Accu-Chek® Guide
- Accu-Chek® Aviva Plus
- Accu-Chek® SmartView

Remember, when you use one of the approved meters and corresponding strips, your cost-share for diabetes testing and monitoring supplies is a \$0 copay. If you are using another brand and would like to switch to one of the preferred brands, you may be required to get a new prescription from your doctor. If you have questions concerning UHC's Preferred Diabetic Supply Program, you can contact UHC at **(888) 736-7441** or via their website at [www.UHCretiree.com](http://www.UHCretiree.com).