

# Balancing Act: Thriving with Diabetes

- 87 years, started by Railway Mail Carriers
- 2+ million members worldwide
- One of the largest carriers in the FEHB
- Exclusively Federal / Postal / Annuitants
- Extensive nationwide network of doctors, dentists, hospitals and other providers
- Your friend in federal

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# Today's presenters



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Clinical Operations, Nurse | GEHA



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Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist | GEHA

# Agenda

- What is diabetes?
- Types of diabetes
- Diagnosis of diabetes
- Prevention and management
- Nutrition
- Resources
- Q & A



# Did you know...

- Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of severe vision loss and blindness among working age Americans
- Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 cause of death in people with diabetes
- Men are at higher risk for diabetes than women
- Half of all diabetes cases are undiagnosed

# Social determinants of health and diabetes

## Prevalence of diabetes

- Highest among American Indian and Alaska Native adults
- Varies significantly by education and income level
- Higher rates in rural areas





# What is diabetes?

- A metabolic disease where the body doesn't produce insulin or use insulin correctly
- Results in high blood sugar

Source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

# Signs and symptoms



- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss—even though you are eating more (Type 1)
- Tingling, pain or numbness in the hands or feet (Type 2)



# Prediabetes



Blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as Type 2 diabetes. No clear symptoms, most times.



Treatment is typically lifestyle changes such as healthier eating choices, exercise, better sleep and stress management.



It's important for regular check-ups and screenings, especially those at higher risk

# Polling Question #1

Check the correct answer: What are the types of diabetes?

- a) Gestational
- b) Type 1
- c) Type 2
- d) All above



# Diabetes types

**Gestational**

**Type 1**

**Type 2**





# Gestational diabetes

- Up to **10%** of pregnancies
- Risk factors
  - History of gestational diabetes, being overweight, advanced maternal age, family history, PCOS, ethnic background
- Treatment
  - Stabilize glucose levels
  - Special meal plans
  - Regular physical activity

Source: [American Diabetes Association](#)

# Type 1 diabetes

- Autoimmune condition
- The body produces little or no insulin
- Develops in children or young adults, but can occur at any age
- Requires daily insulin
- Healthy diet, exercise and close monitoring of blood glucose levels is needed daily





## Type 2 diabetes

- The most common form of diabetes
- The body doesn't use insulin effectively
- Develops over many years
- Requires lifestyle changes, including eating a healthy diet, weight management, exercise and possible medication

Source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

# Diabetes risk factors and diagnosis



# Risk factors

- Prediabetes
- Overweight/obesity
- Male
- Age 45 or older
- Family history
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Unhealthy diet
- History of gestational diabetes
- Ethnic background
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease





# Hemoglobin A1C

- Blood test that measures the average blood sugar levels over the past two to three months.
- A1C goal is often **less than 7%**
  - **Normal:** below **5.7%**
  - **Prediabetes:** between **5.7%** and **6.4%**
  - **Diabetes:** **6.5%** or higher

Rating	HbA1C test score	Mean blood mg/dl
Excellent	5.0	80
	6.0	115
Good	7.0	150
	8.0	180
Poor	9.0	215
	10	250
	11	280
	12	315
	13	350
	14	380

# Prevention and management



# Diabetes prevention



- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a balanced diet
- Get regular physical activity
- Practice stress management
- Keep healthy sleep patterns
- Avoid tobacco
- Limit alcohol
- Get regular check-ups

# Managing diabetes

- Mental health
  - Diabetes distress
- Monitor blood sugar levels regularly
- Adherence to medications
- Stay positive



# Managing diabetes (continued)

- Weight loss
- Consult with health care team
- Losing weight (start with **5%**) can improve blood sugar
- Focus on making it a lifestyle change



# Devices and technology

## BGM (Blood Glucose Monitors)

- Requires a lancing device for a small amount of blood on a strip
- Results in about five seconds

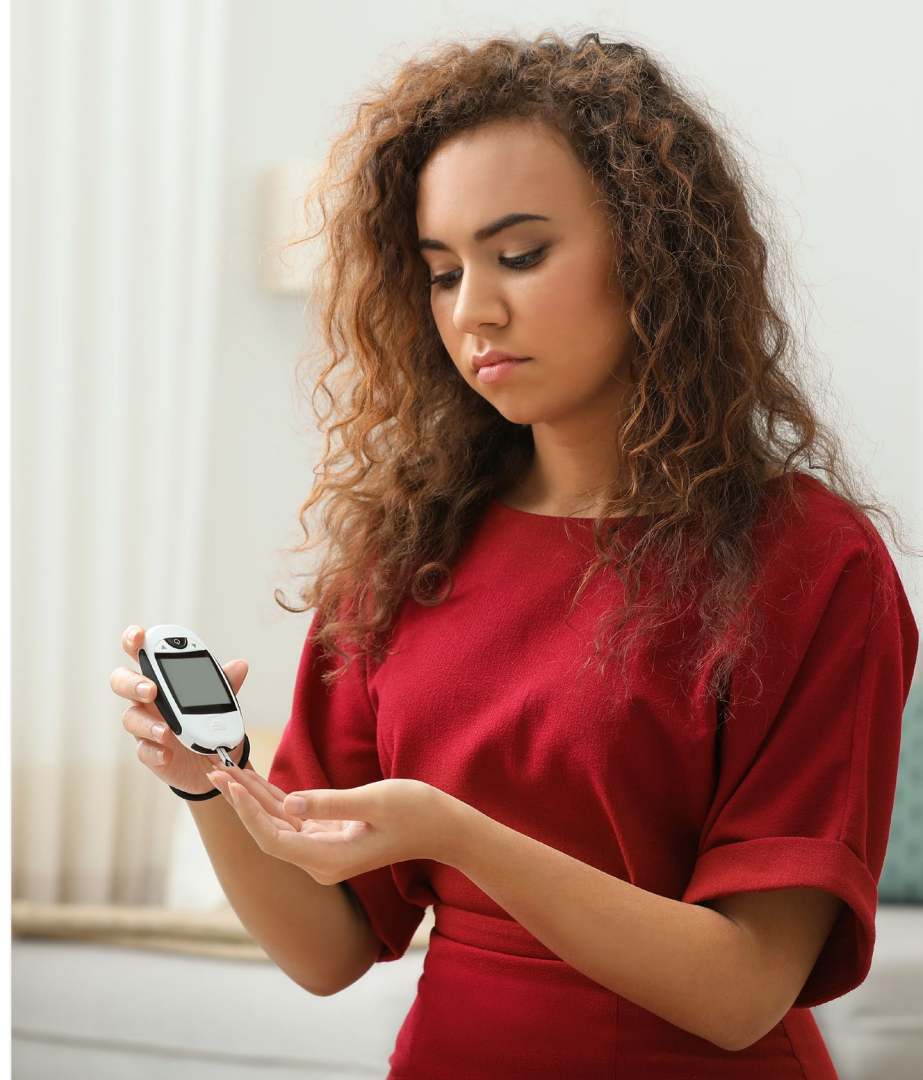
## CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitors)

- Uses a tiny catheter inserted into the top layer of skin every 10-14 days
- Provides regular automatic blood sugar readings



# Choosing a device

- User-friendly features
- Affordability and insurance
- Data accessibility
- Versatility





# Complications of diabetes

- Cardiovascular disease
- Neuropathy (nerve damage)
- Retinopathy (eye complications)
- Nephropathy (kidney disease)
- Foot complications
- Skin complications
- Increased risk of infections
- Dental health issues



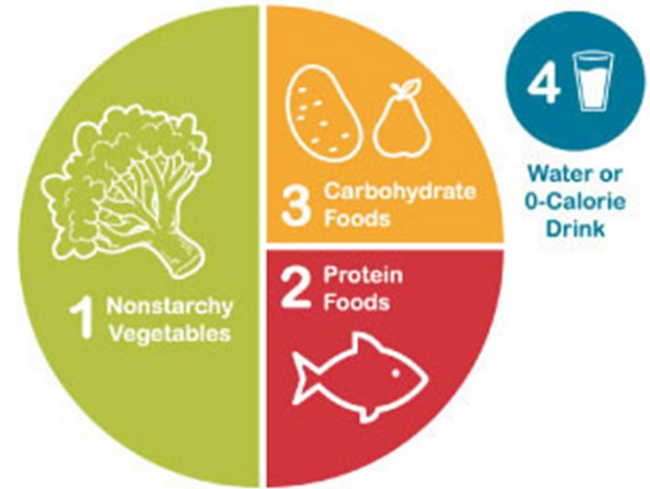
# Nutrition for Diabetes Management



# Diabetes plate method

Use the diabetes plate method to help create balance for each meal.

- Fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats and plant-based sources of protein
- Less added sugar
- Less processed foods
- Water or zero-calorie drinks



# What can I eat?

- Balanced diet with portion control
- Meal planning and regular eating schedules
- Lean proteins
- Fiber rich foods - eat more veggies!
- Complex carbohydrates
- Healthy fats
- Water for hydration
- Consult with a dietician or nutritionist



# What foods to limit?

- Sugary foods and beverages
- Refined carbohydrate foods
- Saturated and trans fat
- High sodium foods
- Sweetened and flavored products
- Alcohol



# Mealtime

- Consistent meal schedule
- Spread out carbohydrates
- Consider mealtime around medications
- Meals before and after work-outs
- Bedtime snack, as needed
- Mindful eating - listen to your body



## Polling Question #2

Have you or someone you know made significant lifestyle changes to prevent or manage diabetes effectively?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not yet but trying



# Salmon quinoa power bowl

- 2 salmon fillets
- ½ cup corn (drained and rinsed)
- ½ cup of diced cherry tomatoes
- ½ cup of feta cheese
- ½ cup of salsa
- 1 large cucumber
- ½ cup of quinoa
- 1 sliced avocado

## Nutrition facts: (per serving)

351 calories | 17 gm carbohydrates | 27 gm protein  
19 gm fat | 15 grams fiber

Find more recipes at [diabetesfoodhub.org/](https://diabetesfoodhub.org/)





## Recap

- Diabetes is very manageable
- Make lifestyle changes
- Check and control blood sugar levels
- Work with a health care provider to get the resources for you
  - Diabetes classes/ DPP
  - Consult with a dietitian/ CDE



# GEHA member resources

- Elevate and Elevate Plus plans
  - Rally digital health platform
  - Learn more at [geha.com/WellnessPays](https://geha.com/WellnessPays)
- High, Standard, and HDHP plans
  - GEHA Well-being portal
  - Learn more at [geha.com/HealthRewards](https://geha.com/HealthRewards)
- All GEHA plans
  - Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
  - Learn more at [geha.com/geha-blog](https://geha.com/geha-blog)
- GEHA website for benefit information [geha.com](https://geha.com)

# Thank you,



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Q&A chat will go on through 1 p.m. Eastern time

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