# Diabetes and you:
# the importance of goal setting

*Taking an active role in your diabetes management by setting realistic and specific goals is important for your long term physical and mental health and can go a long way towards preventing complications.*

Your doctor will set medical goals for you but there are also goals you can set for yourself like attending all your medical appointments, taking your medications as prescribed and leading a healthy lifestyle.[1,2]

## How can you set SMART goals that you can actually achieve?[1,2]

Setting SMART goals means you can clarify your ideas, focus your efforts, and increase your chances of achieving what you want in life.

| | |
|---|---|
| **S**pecific | • What exactly do I want to achieve? |
| **M**onitor | • How will I know this plan is working – what will I monitor? |
| **A**ction | • What action am I going to take? |
| **R**ealistic | • Is this goal realistic or is it too challenging right now?<br>Tip: Start small and gradually build up. |
| **T**ime specific | • When am I going to do this?<br>• When will I review this plan? |

## Here's an example:

*What do I want to change?*

- I want to start walking again and improve my fitness.

*How am I going to do this?*

- Go for a 15 minute walk on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sunday for the next 6 weeks.

*What might stop me and how can I overcome this?*

- Not having the energy – arrange to walk with my neighbour so we can encourage each other to do it even when we might not feel like it.
- The weather – walk in the morning before it gets too hot and take an umbrella if it's raining.

*When will I review this plan?*

- At 6 weeks to see if I am on track.

# Setting and achieving your lifestyle goals[1,2]

Now that you know how it's done, set yourself some SMART goals for each of the lifestyle categories below where you are keen to make some changes. You can work with your GP, diabetes educator, dietitian, exercise physiologist and other health professionals for additional support in setting suitable goals that will work for you.

| | | *Your goals:* |
|---|---|---|
| | ***Eat a nutritious balanced diet***<br>Healthy eating is very important for people with diabetes. For more information on what healthy eating actually means, check out our information sheet called Diabetes and you: the role of good nutrition and being active.<br>You can also refer to National Diabetes Services Scheme **www.ndss.com.au** *Making Healthy Food Choices Fact Sheet,* or ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian. | |
| | ***Engage in regular physical activity***<br>Physical activity plays an important role in keeping people with type 2 diabetes healthy. This is because exercise can help to lower blood glucose levels as well as help you maintain a healthy weight, lower your blood pressure and reduce stress.<br>You can find out more about exercise for people with type 2 diabetes by visiting **www.ndss.com.au** *Physical Activity Fact Sheet*<br>You can also ask your doctor to refer you to an exercise physiologist. | |
| | ***Keep your mind healthy***<br>Your emotional health is important. If living with diabetes is making you feel anxious or is getting you down, you are not alone. Discussing your concerns with your health team can then provide you with support and services to assist you. Several fact sheets on emotional health can be access by visiting **www.ndss.com.au**. You can also contact Beyond Blue on **1300 224 636.** | |
| | ***Quit smoking***<br>If you are a smoker, quitting smoking will have both immediate and longer-term benefits. It is one of the most important things you can do, not only can it reduce your risk of heart disease, but it will improve your overall general health. For more information, talk to your doctor or call Quitline on **13 78 48.** | |
| | ***Follow your doctor's recommendations***<br>This includes remembering to take all your medications as prescribed and attending all follow up appointments. If you are finding this difficult, talk to your doctor and they can help overcome any challenges you may be having. | |
| | ***Additional goals:*** | |

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This leaflet is not intended as a substitute for advice from a qualified medical professional, nor is it considered a comprehensive and exhaustive source of information. If you have any questions about your diagnosis or treatment, please speak to your doctor.

**References: 1.** Diabetes SA. Goals of diabetes management. Available at: https://www.diabetessa.com.au/Web/Education_and_Events/DiabetesSA_Resources/Goals_of_Diabetes_Management.aspx. Accessed February 2021. **2.** The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Management of type 2 diabetes: A handbook for general practice. East Melbourne, Vic: RACGP, 2020.

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