



# Aetna Better Health® of Virginia

Diabetes

Spring/Summer 2020

## Get to know your diabetes ABCs

Want to be as healthy as you can — now and in the future? When you have diabetes, a good place to start is with your ABCs:

**A is for A1C.** This test tells you if you're meeting your blood sugar goals. It measures your average blood sugar over the past three months.

**B is for blood pressure.** Keeping your blood pressure in check can protect your heart, kidneys and eyes.

**C is for cholesterol.** Managing your cholesterol can help you avoid a heart attack or stroke.

**S is for smoking.** If you smoke, quitting could lower your risk of kidney disease, nerve damage and other diabetes-related problems.

### Where to start

Ask your doctor what your ABC goals should be — and how often you need to be tested. If you need to make some changes, don't worry. You and your doctor can work together on a plan to get you where you need to be.

One of the best steps you can take: Be sure to take your medicines every day exactly as prescribed. Their job is to help keep you well.

*Sources: American Diabetes Association (Diabetes.org); National Institutes of Health (NIH.gov)*

## Four ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.
3. Take your medications.
4. Aim for healthy habits.

*Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ.gov)*



**Did you know** that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to [AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia](http://AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia) or call Member Services at **1-800-279-1878** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.



[AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia](http://AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia)

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## Focus on eye health

If you have diabetes, here's one of the best ways to protect your sight: Have an eye exam.

Diabetes can raise the risk of eye problems. Over time, high blood sugar can lead to:

- Retinopathy
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma

You may not notice these problems at first. But if not treated, they can slowly cause vision loss or even blindness.

### Set your sights on healthy eyes

The good news? You can take steps to help protect your eyes from diabetes:

#### Manage your blood sugar.

Work with your doctor to make lifestyle changes and take medicines, if needed.



**Get eye exams on time.** Eye exams can find eye problems early. That's when treatment often works best. Ask your doctor how often to have eye exams. For most people, it's once a year.

*Sources: American Diabetes Association (Diabetes.org); National Eye Institute (NEI.NIH.gov)*

## Keep an eye on your feet too

People with diabetes are prone to foot problems. If you have diabetes, check your feet for cuts, sores and other problems every day. If a sore develops, call or see a doctor quickly.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov)*

### Contact us



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Member Services: **1-800-279-1878**  
**(TTY: 711 or 1-800-828-1120)**  
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**AetnaBetterHealth.com/Virginia**

 This newsletter contains general health information that should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs. If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services at the number above and ask for the Care Management Department.

## Know the risks of opioids

Opioids are strong pain medicines. They're easy to get addicted to.

If you need help with pain, talk to your doctor about safer options. If you use an opioid, take the smallest dose you can for the shortest time, and ask about Narcan. It could save your life.

### Want to be drug-free?

Call the National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP**  
**(1-800-662-4357)**.

*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA.gov)*

**Need help? Your care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.**