

4 ways to put your diabetes meds to work!

Today's many treatment options can help people with diabetes enjoy a long, healthy life. The key is taking them as prescribed.



1 Know your medicine. Find out how your medication works, recommends Maureen Williams, RN, CDE, a diabetes educator at Bayonne (NJ) Medical Center. For example, some work by helping your body be more responsive to insulin or slowing the digestion of carbs. Others help your pancreas release insulin when your blood sugar is high. Studies show that people who understand how their treatment works are more likely to stay the course and reap the benefits.

2 Know when to take it. Whether you take a pill just once a day or a shot once a week, being consistent will yield the best results, so



create a routine. For example, take your pill while waiting for your coffee to brew. If you have to take your pills twice a day, find out exactly what that means. "I had a patient who was taking his mealtime pills at bedtime—and seeing his blood sugar get worse!" says Williams.



3 Find the reminder that works for you. If you're visual, try sticking a note on the countertop or bathroom mirror, suggests Williams. More of a techie? Use an app like MediSafe Project or

Pill Monitor. Need something foolproof? For an additional fee, some pharmacies will package your pills in special blister packs, noting the time of day to take each one.



4 Rally support. "Take a loved one to visits so they get the education to help you," says Williams. *Note:* Apps like MediSafe Project also alert caregivers when a dose has been missed! 📱

"HOW CAN I AFFORD MY MEDS?"

Don't let money issues stand between you and the treatment you need. Many drug makers have patient assistance programs—like savings cards or discount programs. Ask your diabetes care team if the company that makes your medicine offers such benefits, or log onto the product website yourself!

Partnering with your care team

Luckily, you don't have to go it alone when you have type 2. You have a whole team behind you, including NURSE PRACTITIONERS, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS, DIABETES EDUCATORS and ENDOCRINOLOGISTS. Here, people with type 2 share the invaluable tips they received from a member of their care team. BY AMY CAPETTA



MY NURSE PRACTITIONER SAYS:

"Learn about good nutrition"



Patient: Martha Self, seen here with her husband, figured out how to swap in healthy, delicious foods to feel satisfied and keep her blood sugar under control.



Nurse practitioner: Cheryl Haas Winter, MS, a board-certified family nurse practitioner and president of Diabetes Steps Rx, Montgomery, TX

people with type 2 diabetes lower their fasting blood sugar. And researchers at UC Irvine found that MUFAs help you feel full, so you're less likely to overeat.

- ♦ **Learn about food swaps.** "Cheryl suggested I switch from white flour to almond flour, because this alternative often doesn't cause an increase in blood sugar—and it worked in my case! I've also gone from regular milk to unsweetened almond milk."
- ♦ **Find your healthy carbs.** Frequent testing helped Martha zero in on how different carbs affected her blood sugar. "Sweet potatoes and yams will not spike my sugars like white potatoes." And instead of pasta, she "spiralizes" zucchini or squash into noodles. Non-starchy veggies, like kale, are her other go-tos.
- ♦ **Embrace the "good" fats.** "Cheryl taught me not to be afraid of 'good' fats—especially the kind found in avocados, nuts and olive oil," says Martha. They are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs), which have been found to help increase the body's response to insulin and help