The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) is dedicated to empowering people with diabetes to live full and healthy lives. Diabetes educators are nurses, dietitians, pharmacists and other health professionals who work in partnership with doctors and other healthcare providers to help people manage all the daily aspects of diabetes care, from healthy eating and being active to problem solving and healthy coping. AADE was founded in 1973 and today has more than 14,000 members. Learn more or find a diabetes educator at www.diabeteseducator.org.

LIVING WITH DIABETES

Diabetes Educators Can Help

When you have diabetes it’s especially important to stay healthy, although sometimes it isn’t easy. But you are not alone – more than 29 million Americans have the disease. And you don’t have to go it alone – a diabetes educator can help you find solutions to staying healthy that fit into your lifestyle.

**Diabetes education** helps people with diabetes learn how to manage their disease and be as healthy as possible by focusing on seven self-care behaviors: healthy eating, being active, monitoring, taking medication, problem solving, healthy coping and reducing risks.

**Diabetes educators** are experienced healthcare professionals – such as registered nurses, registered dietitians or pharmacists – who have special knowledge and skills to help you successfully manage all aspects of your diabetes. Like many people with diabetes, you may find managing the disease is difficult. That’s where a diabetes educator can help, by working with you to design a specific plan that includes the tools and support you need.

Diabetes education works. Studies show that diabetes education helps people lower their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. These things help you stay healthier and reduce the risk of diabetes complications.

Doctors agree that diabetes education is helpful. In a survey of doctors whose patients with diabetes worked with a diabetes educator:

- **80%** said their patients have more knowledge
- **78%** said their patients’ experience was positive
- **71%** said their patients are healthier
THE SEVEN SELF-CARE BEHAVIORS

The goal of diabetes education is to help you to take care of yourself in seven important areas:

1. Healthy eating – What and how often you eat affects your blood sugar. A diabetes educator will work with you to read food labels, count carbohydrates, understand portion sizes and make choices that work for your tastes, schedule and lifestyle.

2. Being active – Being active has many health benefits, from lowering your blood sugar and cholesterol, to easing stress. A diabetes educator will help you find ways to move more throughout the day as well as find activities that increase your heart rate that you enjoy.

3. Monitoring – When you have diabetes, your body doesn’t properly manage blood sugar (glucose), its main source of fuel. A diabetes educator will show you how to use a blood glucose meter and record your blood sugar, and figure out what to do when the numbers are out of your goal range.

4. Taking medication – You may need to take medication to help keep your blood sugar (glucose) level steady or to help with other health conditions. A diabetes educator will explain how to take your medications, the amount you should take, and why they help you.

5. Problem solving – Even when you plan your day, unexpected things can happen. A diabetes educator can help you figure out how to deal with issues when they come up.

6. Healthy coping – You can’t completely avoid stress, so it’s important to know how to cope. A diabetes educator will help you identify difficulties you may face. They provide support by encouraging you to talk about your concerns. They can help you learn what you can control and offer ways to help you cope with what you cannot.

7. Reducing risks – Taking control of your diabetes will help you head off the complications that can come with it. A diabetes educator can shed light on things that you can do to reduce your risks and make staying healthy easier – such as quitting smoking, getting a flu shot or seeing an eye doctor once a year.

WORKING WITH A DIABETES EDUCATOR

To find a diabetes educator near you, visit www.diabeteseducator.org/find. Whether you find one through the website or your doctor tells you about one, you need a referral for diabetes education. Diabetes education is covered by Medicare and most insurance companies when it is provided by a diabetes educator within a program accredited or recognized by either the American Association of Diabetes Educators or the American Diabetes Association.