



National Diabetes Services Scheme

An Australian Government Initiative

NDSS Helpline 1800 637 700  
[ndss.com.au](http://ndss.com.au)

# Information Prescriptions

The key to unlocking  
behaviour change

An overview for health professionals



The NDSS is administered by Diabetes Australia

First developed by Diabetes UK, more than **100,000** Information Prescriptions have been written into patient records in the UK. They have been shown to motivate and engage people living with diabetes to take action towards self-managing their diabetes. With agreement from Diabetes UK, Diabetes Australia has adapted the Information Prescriptions for Australian use.

The design of the Information Prescriptions allows best practice around care planning and goal setting to be done during routine care. They are an easy way to help your patients better understand their diabetes. They are also a gateway to more information and support for people living with diabetes.

This booklet will help you find out more about how they work and how to use them.

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The Commonwealth and Diabetes Australia takes no responsibility for any adverse consequences that arise as a result of using the content of the resources for clinical purposes. Trainees and other health professionals need to consider the individual circumstances and needs of people with diabetes when they are applying the skills outlined in this resource in their clinical practice information.

# What is an Information Prescription?

Information Prescriptions are a personalised single A4 page which include easy-to-read explanations, clear images and individual goals to help prevent diabetes health complications. They are designed to give people with diabetes the information that they need to understand, engage with and improve on their health targets.

General practitioners and other health care professionals can use Information Prescriptions to assist in their clinical practice and increase engagement of people with diabetes in their self-care.

## Why Information Prescriptions matter?



### Individual support

- a personalised document that is short and easy to read



### National reach

- they are available through the NDSS [ndss.com.au](https://ndss.com.au)



### Fight against health complications

- clinically accurate information to support people with diabetes reduce the risks of serious diabetes-related complications



### Opportunity to transform care

- designed to support care planning and behaviour change enabling self-care

# Why are they needed?

The cost of diabetes to the Australian economy and health system is estimated at over \$14.6 billion per year. Diabetes is a leading cause of preventable hospital admissions in Australia. Information Prescriptions are a quick and effective tool. They increase a person with diabetes understanding of their condition and help them become more engaged in self-management.

# How were they created?

Information Prescriptions were first developed by Diabetes UK. They are co-produced by clinicians, health academics, psychologists and people with diabetes. This ensures they are clinically accurate, easy to read and use the latest evidence in terms of supporting behaviour change.

**Personal**

**Clear information**

**Visually powerful**

**Actions to reduce risk**

**Personal care planning**

**Signpost for support and information**

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### Diabetes and your HbA1c Information Prescription

Your last two HbA1c results are: // / / / /

Managing your day-to-day glucose levels and your longer-term average levels (Haemoglobin A1c or HbA1c) is important to help reduce your risk of serious complications.

Discuss a realistic personal target for your HbA1c with your diabetes health care team.

**What is HbA1c?**  
HbA1c is a measure of how much glucose is stuck to your red blood cells. Although it is not a direct measure of blood glucose, it is closely related to your blood glucose levels over the last 10-12 weeks. A finger-prick check is a snapshot of your glucose at a moment in time and can help you understand if you are "high" or "low" and what happens if you change your diet, activity or are unwell.

**Medication** It may be time to increase your dose or introduce a new medication.

**Education** Your health care team are there to provide support, and to help you manage your diabetes. Learn about monitoring your blood glucose levels to help keep them in target more often. Check the NDSS website: ndss.com.au.

**Lifestyle** Discuss what changes can lower your HbA1c.

**Eat a healthy balanced diet**

- ☐ Eat a variety of vegetables and fruit. Aim for five serves of vegetables and two of fruit every day.
- ☐ Ensure food portion sizes are appropriate for you to keep a healthy weight.
- ☐ Reduce salt: eat less fast food, choose low-salt options, and avoid adding salt.
- ☐ Aim for at least two to three serves of oily fish a week.
- ☐ Eat less fatty food, processed meats, full-fat dairy, creamy sauce, deep fried foods, pastries.
- ☐ If you drink, cut down on alcohol.
- ☐ Stay hydrated – water is best.

**Get more active:**

- ☐ Aim for 30 minutes of activity five times a week to raise your heartbeat. Activities like walking fast and cycling all count.
- Twice a week, add activities like gardening or yoga to strengthen your muscles.

**When is high HbA1c a problem?**  
Over time, high glucose levels can damage the blood vessels. This puts you at a higher risk of developing diabetes-related complications such as going blind, losing a limb, or experiencing kidney failure. It also increases the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

**How can I lower my HbA1c?**  
It is important to understand that your HbA1c will change for many reasons including: how long you have had diabetes, sickness, depression, change in lifestyle or because of other medicine such as steroids. The actions you take to lower your HbA1c will depend on whether you have type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes and your overall health. The next column has three main areas for you to consider.

**My next steps** Discuss with your diabetes health care team two actions you are going to focus on (think about what, where, when and how).

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Health professional: \_\_\_\_\_ Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information about programs, services and support, call the NDSS Helpline on 1800 637 700 or visit ndss.com.au.

**diabetes australia**  
The NDSS is subsidised by Diabetes Australia.

# Types of Information Prescriptions

There are ten diabetes Information Prescriptions adapted for the NDSS.

These cover key health markers that influence someone's risk of complications as well as additional information for clinicians and people with diabetes.



Diabetes and your  
blood pressure



Diabetes and your  
cholesterol



Diabetes and your  
HbA1c



My emotions  
and diabetes



Keeping your  
kidneys healthy



Diabetes and  
kidney disease



Contraception  
and pregnancy



Diabetes and your  
feet – low risk



Diabetes and your feet  
– moderate to high risk



Improving your  
diabetes knowledge

These are our three core Information Prescriptions. They focus on the three key health markers that influence someone's risk of complications, where less than 50 per cent of people with diabetes achieve the RACGP recommended targets.

*(Burden of Diabetes in Australia: It's Time for More Action 2018)*

People outside these targets for periods of time are at higher risk of diabetes related complications including blindness, kidney failure, amputation, heart attack or stroke.

# What do health professionals consider to be the most valuable part of the Information Prescriptions?

## The language

- » Easy to understand language to help people with diabetes keep track of their progress
- » Explains in simple terms what each element is and how it impacts diabetes

## They are interactive

- » The ability to record personalised goals for that specific topic
- » Offering practical advice of what people living with diabetes can do themselves

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**“The Information Prescriptions help me to plan better if there is a problem with my results.”**

– Person living with diabetes

## Language matters

Many health professionals and services acknowledge that people with diabetes need to participate actively in their self-care yet continue to use disengaging words and phrases that can disrespect the individual's autonomy. In many instances, such language is used without full appreciation of its unintended meaning or impact. Rather, we need more careful use of language that:

- 1. Promotes active engagement.** Discussing 'diabetes management options' or 'self-management choices' encourages people with diabetes to be actively involved in making decisions about their own health.
- 2. Supports the self-care efforts people make.** Health outcomes depend largely on activities and choices people make outside of health consultations. Using respectful and comprehensible language can help individuals realise they are capable of and encouraged to make informed choices about their diabetes, and that their choices are respected.
- 3. Acknowledges the frustrations, anxieties, guilt and distress that could come with living with a chronic condition.**

More information about language can be found at [diabetesaustralia.com.au/position-statements](https://diabetesaustralia.com.au/position-statements).

You can access information prescriptions through your clinic medical software via HealthShare, as well as on the NDSS website [ndss.com.au/information-prescriptions](https://ndss.com.au/information-prescriptions).

