



Managing your medications

Expect more from your Medco Diabetes Pharmacist

By Beverly Caskey, R.Ph.

Call your Diabetes Pharmacist for a private medication checkup.

Find out more about managing your drug therapy.

There is never a cost to you for advice from a specialist pharmacist.

Just call the toll-free number on your prescription drug ID card.

Ask the pharmacist . . .

- ✓ How can I help prevent my condition from getting worse in the future?
- ✓ If I feel fine, do I really need to take my medications?
- ✓ Do you have any tips on managing the side effects of my medications?
- ✓ Could we review what each medication does for me and how each one works?
- ✓ Do my medications work safely with my over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and diet?
- ✓ Are there any lower-cost treatment options that may be equally effective?

If you have diabetes, you know that taking your medication as prescribed by your doctor is critical to successfully managing your condition. For many patients, following their doctor's treatment plan can be difficult or overwhelming—especially if they're taking multiple medications or managing more than one condition.

Now there's someone you can talk to who can give you expert advice on managing your diabetes medications and their cost—a Medco Diabetes Pharmacist.

Specialized training—extensive experience

As a Diabetes Pharmacist, I've received specialized training in the medications used to treat diabetes. This training, plus extensive experience in caring only for patients with diabetes, enables me to work with you and your doctor to help ensure that your medications work safely and effectively for you.

You can speak with me or, if you have more than one condition, another Medco specialist pharmacist whenever you have a question or concern about your treatment. What's more, I can give you my undivided attention as I answer your questions in a private, distraction-free conversation.

Seeing the big picture—a patient's medication history

I strive to provide patients with an advanced level of personalized care. One way I do that is by looking at all the medications they may be taking; plus, when I have relevant medical data, I review any additional conditions they may have.

Many patients are taking several medications for multiple health conditions and often see more than one doctor. Looking at their medication history, I can identify potentially harmful drug interactions and alert the patient and the doctor about an alternative treatment plan *before* there's a problem.

One example concerns diabetes and antibiotics. Patients with diabetes are especially at risk of infection and may be prescribed an antibiotic to treat one. But there's a potential risk: Antibiotics can affect blood sugar levels. This means that patients may need to adjust their dose of insulin. As a Diabetes Pharmacist, I can work with patients and their doctors to adjust the dose appropriately and help patients monitor their health.

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Helping patients better understand their treatment—and lower-cost options

I often hear from patients who don't fully understand their treatment. This provides an opportunity to explain their treatment plan thoroughly and help them stay on track. In turn, this can help them avoid costly and inconvenient problems such as emergency room visits.

And because I understand how each patient's prescription plan is set up, I can go over co-payments and talk with patients and their doctors about treatment options that may be more affordable yet just as effective. Partnering with your doctor to help you reach your treatment goals, your Diabetes Pharmacist can play a significant role in your health professional "circle of care."

Diabetes Pharmacists can help you safeguard your health—and avoid problems

Many people with diabetes take medications to control blood sugar. Even if you feel fine, high blood sugar can be serious. It can lead to heart disease, kidney disease, nerve damage, blindness, or amputations.

The good news is that lowering your blood sugar with medication can help reduce your risk of:

- > Heart attack by one-sixth
- > Kidney disease by one-half
- > Nerve damage by almost two-thirds
- > Eye disease or blindness by three-quarters

Taking your diabetes medication correctly can benefit you in other ways, including reducing your risk of foot ulcers, poor circulation (blood flow), and skin infection, and you may just feel better and have more energy.

Speaking with a Diabetes Pharmacist—there's no extra cost

One of the biggest advantages of having a Medco Diabetes Pharmacist help you manage your health is that there's no extra cost for this advanced level of personalized care—it's already part of your prescription drug benefit. And although I specialize in treatments for diabetes, with my many years of experience as a pharmacist, I can help you with any other medication needs. If you need additional support for another condition, I can also consult with other Medco specialist pharmacists who are experts in other conditions, or put you in touch with them directly.

Calling your Diabetes Pharmacist 24/7—the number is on your prescription drug ID card

To speak with a Medco Diabetes Pharmacist, call the toll-free number on your prescription drug ID card. You can reach a Diabetes Pharmacist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can learn more about your condition at the website of the American Diabetes Association, www.diabetes.org. And to read about how Medco specialist pharmacists are helping other patients, visit www.medcospecialists.com. You can also find information on the latest developments related to your condition by visiting the Health and Wellness section of medco.com®.

Medco specialist pharmacists have a degree in pharmacy and have a license in the state in which they practice. Besides answering your questions, Diabetes Pharmacists can identify potential health risks such as side effects, unsafe drug interactions, untreated symptoms, dosing that's too high or too low, and incompatible drug selection.