

Diabetes: Seeing a Certified Diabetes Educator



Why see a CDE?

A certified diabetes educator (CDE) is a health professional who has special training to support you with managing your diabetes. CDEs are often registered nurses, registered dietitians, pharmacists, social workers, and even doctors. With your needs in mind, a CDE offers you guidance with daily diabetes care. And in group classes, a CDE also gives you a setting to learn and connect with others who have diabetes.

You might wonder if this kind of health care is worth the time or money. Or you might want to know what a CDE offers that your doctor doesn't. The fact is, doctors want their patients to get the personal support and guidance that a CDE can give.

A CDE can make all the difference as you learn and plan for a healthier life.

When do you see a CDE?

Experts recommend that you see a CDE at certain points in your diabetes care. These include:

- Getting you started when you're first diagnosed with diabetes.

- Checking in once a year for a tune-up. (This includes problem-solving about daily care and looking at what you're doing well and for new things to try.)
- Learning how to handle a new health problem along with your diabetes.
- Moving to a new health care team.

CDE visits can be a key part of conquering the challenges that diabetes can throw your way. Sometimes, simple changes can make a big difference. And then there are times when you want to make a big change you've been meaning to get to. A CDE can help you succeed with whatever you're ready for.

How have other people used a CDE?

At first, a lot of people aren't sure how a CDE can help them manage their diabetes. But after working with one, most people find a CDE to be a helpful clinician on their treatment team.

Roberta's story: "My doctor was pretty good at explaining things to me. But I didn't know how much I was missing until I had my first CDE appointments. We went over blood sugar and medicine in a different way. And the CDE had a lot more time for questions than my doctor has. Now my insulin routine is a little easier."

Sam's story: "I'm careful with my money and resisted going to a CDE because of the cost. But when my A1c got too high, my doctor insisted. It turns out that Medicare covers a lot of the cost, and now I wish I'd gone sooner. We talked about my daily routines down to such detail that I learned all kinds of easy changes I could make for the better. I just had no idea what I was missing before then."

What are your reasons for working with a CDE?

If you'd like, think through these questions and write down what comes to mind.

Questions about seeing a certified diabetes educator (CDE)

What keeps me from getting the help of a CDE?

What would be the good things about seeing a CDE?

What are the top three reasons I would want a CDE on my team?

If I wanted to get a CDE's help, what are the steps I would take to find one? Who could help me?

Let's say it's a year from now, and visits with a CDE have been successful. What has happened in these meetings? What made them helpful and worth my time?

With these thoughts in mind, what do I want to happen next? What is my next step?