

Know your healthcare professionals

Who to look for in your journey of Diabetes care and recovery



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Roles of Healthcare Professionals for Diabetes Care

It is common for a person living with diabetes to receive treatment from a healthcare team consisting of different healthcare professionals.

The following list serves as a broad guidance on the roles of healthcare professionals for diabetes care. Please note that the list is non-exhaustive, and the names of professions are interchangeable across settings.

General Practitioner

- Makes the diagnosis of diabetes mellitus and works with you to come up with your treatment plan and treatment goals.
- Assesses the need for medications to lower blood sugar levels and determines the right medication and dose.
- Implements technology use where appropriate to empower towards effective self-management and patient education.

Endocrinologist

- Doctor who specialises in diabetes and other diseases of the endocrine system, which produces hormones such as insulin.
- For patients who have difficulty in controlling diabetes or have multiple complications, your physician may recommend you to see an endocrinologist.

Nurse / Diabetes Educator

- Provides health education on disease process, complication and prevention, and lifestyle modification through dietary and exercise interventions.
- Collaborates with patients to develop individualised care/treatment plan and set an achievable lifestyle target.
- Equips and empowers patient with self-management skills (e.g. blood glucose monitoring, insulin therapy, hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia management).

Dietitian

- Develops individualised meal plan oriented towards patient's goals and nutritional needs.
- Helps patients understand how food affects their blood sugar levels.
- Helps patients make practical eating and lifestyle habit changes, and overcome barriers to change amidst daily challenges.

Pharmacist

- Counsels patients on their diabetes medications to enable them to understand their treatment regimen, take their medications correctly and be aware of potential side effects and how to manage them.
- Reinforces the importance of medication adherence and works with patients to understand their needs and lifestyle to better ensure adherence.
- Reviews the dose and choice of medications to ensure safety and efficacy.
- Ensures continual access to medications with the provision of remote counselling, medication review and medication delivery.

Psychologists/ Counsellor

- Provides goal-directed counselling and psychotherapy for diabetes distress and burnout.
- Works collaboratively with the diabetes care team to assess, provides early detection and proactive support for addressing psychological, emotional and behavioural health problems.
- Facilitates health behavioural change to adjust eating habits and activity levels, encourage regular blood glucose monitoring and medication adherence, and enhance diabetes self-management activities.

Physiotherapist

- Works with patients with chronic disease to maximise a person's health and function through physical activity and exercise. This includes understanding the patient's medical history, mobility and activity level, as well as prescription of an individualised exercise program suited to the patient's needs.
- For patients with sub-optimally controlled diabetes, the exercise program will aim to improve blood glucose control to minimise further worsening of their medical condition(s).
- Manages musculoskeletal related pain and those with complex medical needs.

Ophthalmologist

- Doctor who diagnoses and treats eye diseases and eye disorders, such as cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.
- Patients with diabetes are encouraged to visit an ophthalmologist annually for a comprehensive eye examination, for early detection of eye complications caused by diabetes.

Podiatrist

- Specialises in conditions that affect the feet or lower legs.
- Conducts diabetic foot examination to identify early signs of foot complications, thereby preventing amputation.
- Provides routine foot care and manages skin conditions to prevent infections.
- Educates patients on proper foot care and appropriate footwear.

For more information on diabetes-related care services, please refer to the following links:

- [Ancillary Services at Community Health Centre | Agency for Integrated Care \(aic.sg\)](https://aic.sg/ancillary-services-at-community-health-centre)
- [Services by General Practitioners \(Family Medicine Clinics, Primary Care Network\) | Agency for Integrated Care \(aic.sg\)](https://aic.sg/services-by-general-practitioners)