

# Patient Education and Lifestyle Intervention Protocol for Newly Diagnosed Type 2 Diabetes Patients

## Overview

Lifestyle intervention is the **foundation** of type 2 diabetes management. It complements pharmacologic therapy and is often sufficient in the early stages. Effective patient education helps individuals adopt long-term behavior changes that lead to better glycemic control, weight management, and reduced cardiovascular risk.

This protocol provides a **step-by-step guide** for use in **primary care settings**, tailored for newly diagnosed patients.

## Goals of Lifestyle Intervention

- Achieve and maintain **healthy blood glucose levels**
- Promote **sustainable weight loss** (target: 5–10% of initial weight, ideally ~15%)
- Improve **insulin sensitivity**
- Reduce risks of **ASCVD, CKD, and hypertension**
- Enhance **self-management** skills and **long-term adherence**

## Nutrition Counseling

- Refer to a **registered dietitian** for Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) where possible
- Use **individualized meal planning** strategies (e.g., Mediterranean, DASH, low-carb)
- Encourage:
  - Portion control
  - Balanced meals (non-starchy vegetables, lean protein, whole grains)
  - Reduced intake of **added sugars, refined carbs, and saturated fats**
- Use **plate method** visuals and sample meal templates
- Reinforce **label reading**, smart grocery shopping, and meal prep habits

## Physical Activity Recommendations

- Minimum: **150 minutes/week** of **moderate-intensity aerobic exercise** (e.g., brisk walking, cycling)
- Include **resistance training** 2–3 days/week
- Encourage breaking up sedentary time with light activity every 30–60 minutes
- Adapt exercise to comorbidities (e.g., neuropathy, joint issues)
- Use **step-count goals** (e.g., 6,000–10,000 steps/day) for gradual progression

## **Behavioral Support & Self-Management**

- **SMART goals:** Help patients set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound goals
- Emphasize **self-monitoring** of blood glucose, food intake, and activity
- Use **motivational interviewing** and **shared decision-making**
- Reinforce adherence through **positive reinforcement** and **regular follow-up**
- Address **barriers** such as stress, family dynamics, or limited resources

## **Sleep, Stress, and Lifestyle Factors**

- Assess and optimize **sleep quality** (7–9 hours/night)
- Encourage **stress management techniques:** meditation, breathing exercises, walking
- Address **tobacco cessation, alcohol moderation, and screen time reduction**
- Link patients with **community resources** (counseling, support groups, exercise programs)

## **Education Topics to Cover**

- What is diabetes and how it affects the body
- Importance of A1c, blood glucose monitoring, and regular follow-ups
- Signs and treatment of **hypoglycemia** and **hyperglycemia**
- **Foot care, eye care, and routine screening**
- Medication adherence (if prescribed) and avoiding drug-food interactions