



## Diabetes Remission

### **What is diabetes remission?**

Diabetes remission occurs when the blood sugar (or blood glucose) levels of a person living with type 2 diabetes stay below the diabetes threshold without medicine.

According to a 2021 consensus statement from Diabetes United Kingdom, the American Diabetes Association, the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, the Endocrine Society and the Diabetes Surgery Summit, remission is when your hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c, a measure of long-term blood glucose levels) remains below 6.5% for at least three months without diabetes medicine.

The term remission is used because, while a person's diabetes may not be currently active or progressive, this change may not be permanent.

### **Can remission be diagnosed while glucose-lowering medicines are being used?**

No. A diagnosis of diabetes remission can only be made after all diabetes medicines have been stopped for at least three months.

### **How is remission different from a cure?**

While a cure suggests that all aspects of a condition are now normalized and no clinical follow-up or management will be needed, people who go into diabetes remission require regular monitoring for high blood sugar levels and common health complications related to diabetes. At this time, it is unclear how long diabetes remission may last.

### **How common is remission?**

Remission is possible but not common. While specific numbers in the United States or New York are not available, some data suggest that [about 5% of people](#) living with diabetes could go into remission.

### **If remission is diagnosed, are regular medical check-ins and monitoring needed?**

Yes. After achieving diabetes remission, testing of HbA1C and other blood sugar measuring should be done at least once per year to monitor for the return of high blood sugar levels. There can be ongoing effects of high blood sugar levels that occurred in the past. People who go into diabetes remission are advised to continue regular screening for common health complications of diabetes, including kidney health tests, eye exams, blood pressure screenings and foot exams.

## **How can New Yorkers living with type 2 diabetes go into diabetes remission?**

A balanced diet as a primary intervention for managing diabetes can lead to remission, especially when emphasizing whole, plant-based foods with minimal consumption of meat and other animal products.

A balanced diet is most effective in achieving remission when it is accompanied by other lifestyle changes, including:

- Staying physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Sleeping well
- Managing stress

Diabetes remission can also be achieved after undergoing metabolic or bariatric surgery (weight loss surgery).

Learn more about managing diabetes by participating in a Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) program. You can find more information by visiting the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

## **I am a person living with diabetes. How can I learn more about diabetes remission?**

Ask your health care provider about diabetes remission. Also, visit [nyhealthandhospitals.org](#) and search for:

- [Lifestyle Medicine Programs](#); and
- [Diabetes Care](#)

## **I am a provider who cares for people living with diabetes. How can I learn more about diabetes remission?**

You can learn more from these recent consensus reports:

- American Diabetes Association: [Consensus Report: Definition and Interpretation of Remission in Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine: [Dietary Interventions to Treat Type 2 Diabetes in Adults With a Goal of Remission: An Expert Consensus Statement from the American College of Lifestyle Medicine](#)

If you are a primary care provider, consider joining our primary care engagement network, NYC REACH, by visiting [nycreach.org](#).

For more information about diabetes, call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/health/diabetes](#). For help finding a health care provider or no-cost or low-cost health insurance, call **311**.

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