

# CEO of YOUR HEALTH



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2022

In business, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) work with experts to ensure long-term success, ask crucial questions during meetings, and periodically review reports for trends. Make no mistake; you are the CEO of your health, especially involving diabetes.

## Who are your experts?

Successful leaders surround themselves with a team that provides guidance, support, and information for their decisions. Figuring out which experts you want on your health team is the first step to optimal care.

Building a health team requires doing some research. Begin with the list of participating health care professionals in your insurance plan. You may also want to ask trusted friends in your area for recommendations or critically examine health care reputation reviews on social media and the internet.

As you review and consider the options available to you, answer these questions about potential providers for your team:

- Do you want a provider who is the same, or different, gender than you?
- Do you want a provider who is board-certified or has other certifications? Board certification shows that they have taken additional steps, including extra training, continuing education, and standardized exams.
- When and where did they receive their education and training? You may want providers with years of clinical experience, or you may prefer graduates who trained more recently on newer techniques or management options.
- Are they and/or their office affiliated with medical centers or hospitals that you use already, or could use?
- How far away are they/their office located from your home or office? You may consider a local provider if you plan to visit them more frequently, or one farther away if you will only see them once or twice a year.

It's important that you feel comfortable with your team, as you are the CEO of your health and rely on those experts to help you and guide you to make the best decisions about your health. After your initial appointment with a medical expert, you may feel that it's not a good fit, based on communication style or treatment plan recommendations. You may need to do more research and find a health professional that is more compatible with your needs and will support you in your diabetes health plan and other health concerns.

## Essential Health Experts

### General Practitioner/Internist

Not everything in your health portfolio may be related to diabetes. Therefore, it is important to have a physician you can rely on for other health issues. A general practitioner (GP) or internist provides medical care and treatment options for the occasional sinus infections as well as chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, or asthma. (The difference between the two providers is the age of their patients: internists only see adults, whereas GPs see pediatric patients also.) Often, people with type 2 diabetes rely on their internist for their diabetes treatment plans.

### Gynecologist/Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner

A gynecologist or women's health care nurse practitioner is an important part of the health team for women, and especially women living with diabetes. Diabetes can impact reproductive and sexual health in different ways including neuropathy and dryness. Honest discussions with a gynecologist help ensure health issues including ones impacted by diabetes are fully understood. Many health insurance plans offer the option to have a gynecologist as your primary care physician.

### Dentist

As people with diabetes are susceptible to periodontal or gum disease, it's important to visit a dentist for regular cleanings and exams. Early detection of periodontal disease can prevent gum and tooth loss. While dental insurance is not covered under the majority of health plans, as the CEO of your health, it's a worthy investment.

## Diabetes Specialists

### Endocrinologist

Endocrinologists are doctors who focus on the endocrine system, which includes the organs that produce hormones such as the pancreas, adrenal glands, ovaries, and thyroid. Many people with diabetes who use insulin include an endocrinologist on their health teams for their diabetes treatment plans. Many women with diabetes choose to see endocrinologists to ensure successful intensive diabetes management or complex thyroid issues.

### Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (DCES)

An important expert in your diabetes healthcare team may have a DCES designation, which shows they have completed several diabetes-centric requirements, including a comprehensive exam, hours spent with patients, and continuing education (CE) hours. DCESs may be nutritionists, dieticians, mental health professionals, registered nurses, and physical therapists. These individuals will provide important education and guidance to help with your daily diabetes management.

## Additional Specialists

### Cardiologist

As women with diabetes are at greater risks for cardiovascular events, your medical team of experts may include a specialist in the heart and blood vessels for regular diagnostic tests.

### Podiatrist

Your medical team may suggest a doctor that specializes in diagnosis, treatment, and medical care of feet, ankles, and lower extremities.

### Ophthalmologist

It is recommended that every person with diabetes have an annual eye exam that includes eye dilation. This allows the specialist to view the retina and detect any early signs of diabetes-related eye concerns.

### Nephrologist

Renal (kidney) disease is a possibility with diabetes and can be identified by certain diagnostic tests. If a member of your care team has determined your need to see a kidney specialist, you'll see a nephrologist. They'll work with you to determine what your treatment options for management of renal disease.



## What Questions Should You Ask Your Experts?

CEOs never show up to a meeting unprepared, so it is important to attend each of your medical appointments with a list of questions or concerns about your health and treatment plan. You are the leader of your health care conversations. Having questions written down to discuss with your expert before the appointment will help ensure that you get answers about your health and the necessary steps you can take to ensure a long and successful future.

For every appointment, it's crucial to have a list of all the prescription and over-the-counter medications, along with vitamins or supplements, that you are currently taking. If you need a refill for a particular prescription medication, make sure to request it during your health team meeting. It's much easier to have them write the prescription while you are at your appointment.

To help you get started, here are some questions that you may want to ask during your visit:

- Based on my latest results, what changes to my diabetes management do you suggest?
- What advances in diabetes research or technology could help me with diabetes management?
- What is one area of diabetes management that I could concentrate on for the next few months that will improve my overall health?
- How will I know if the medicines I take are working?
- What specific blood or diagnostic tests do you recommend to help ensure a long, healthy life?
- What vaccinations do I need?
- Can you connect me with diabetes support groups in the area?



## CEO of Your Health Reports – Results & Vaccinations to Track

Every leader maintains reports to review regularly, monitor trends, and quickly identify issues if there are significant changes. As the CEO of your health, health history and lab reports can remind you to ask for annual vaccines or tests as well as provide insight into your diabetes treatment plan. By using the worksheet below, you can keep your results in one place. Take this with you to every visit with a health expert.

### Biennial (Every Two Years)

#### Mammogram for women age 50 -74

Date				
Result				

\*Biennial per latest recommendation unless there is an identified risk that requires more frequent testing/testing earlier than age 50.

### Annually

#### Flu Vaccine

Date				
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#### Dilated Eye Exam

Date				
Result				

#### Foot Exam

Date				
Result				

### Every Three to Six Months

#### A1C

Date				
Result				

#### Cholesterol/Triglycerides

Date				
Result				

## Every Expert Visit

### Blood Pressure

Date				
Result				

### Pulse

Date				
Result				

### Weight

Date				
Result				

## Discuss with Medical Team

### Pap Smear (per gynecologist)

Date				
Result				

### Additional blood or diagnostic tests (per expert)

Test Name				
Date				
Result				

### Additional Vaccines (per expert)

Vaccination	COVID-19	Pneumococcal	Shingles	
Date				
Date				