

# Good to Know

Information from the American Diabetes Association for people with diabetes

## Becoming an Advocate

How to make your voice heard in the fight against diabetes

### Why get involved?

If you have diabetes—or know someone with diabetes—you may already be an advocate: negotiating the health care system, dealing with insurance claims, managing diabetes everywhere from school and work to airplanes and restaurants, and keeping the people in your life informed about this disease. This is important, and often challenging, work.

Many people affected by diabetes also find it deeply rewarding to get involved with advocacy efforts that can help the entire diabetes community. Diabetes Advocates:

- tell elected leaders that diabetes is a growing epidemic they cannot ignore
- fight for research and programs to prevent, manage, and cure diabetes
- work to make affordable, quality health care available to everyone with diabetes
- fight for fair treatment of people with diabetes.

Being a Diabetes Advocate can also offer a chance to learn more about managing this condition, and to connect with others who are in the same situation.

### What can advocacy do?

Despite laws intended to protect the rights of people with diabetes, unequal treatment (discrimination) persists even today. People with diabetes have been treated unfairly on the job, at school, in airports and restaurants—even at rock concerts.

Advocates have successfully fought against discrimination, ensuring the right of people with diabetes to live full and healthy lives. In some cases, this has meant educating people about the existing laws, for example, when school personnel are unaware children with diabetes are due the same opportunities as other students. Sometimes, however, advocates must fight in court or work to change the law. To do this requires those facing discrimination to tell their stories,

working together with other advocates, including lawyers and health care professionals.

Diabetes Advocates also make their voices heard in local, state, and federal government, telling lawmakers about their experiences with diabetes and urging them to support important diabetes initiatives.

### How can I make a difference?

There are many ways you can get involved. The box below explains how to sign up for American Diabetes Association (ADA) action alerts and to support our legal advocacy efforts.

In addition, attorneys and health care professionals are needed both as general Diabetes Advocates and to support our legal advocacy efforts by joining the Advocacy Attorney Network or Health Care Professional Legal Advocacy Network. Visit [diabetes.org/discrimination](http://diabetes.org/discrimination) for more information.

#### GET STARTED TODAY!

You can become an ADA Diabetes Advocate right now. Visit [www.diabetes.org/takeaction](http://www.diabetes.org/takeaction) to sign up for action e-mail alerts about how you can make your voice heard by federal and state lawmakers on key diabetes initiatives.

### What if I need help?

Do you believe that you or someone you know has been discriminated against because of diabetes? The ADA is here to help.

→ Call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). This is the first step. You'll talk with someone who can provide you with information about discrimination based on diabetes. You will also have the option of requesting to be referred to a legal advocate who can provide additional assistance with your specific situation. Information about diabetes discrimination can also be found online at [diabetes.org/gethelp](http://diabetes.org/gethelp).

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