# Real World Solutions to Self-Managing Diabetes with Blindness: 6 Common Issues

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# Virginia Department for the Blind (DBVI)

## The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) is committed to providing quality services to assist Virginia's citizens who are blind, deafblind or vision impaired, in achieving their desired level of employment, education, and personal independence. The department provides an array of specialized services to blind Virginians of all ages to assist them in attaining the skills, confidence and positive outlook that are critical to independence. Training occurs either in the client’s home setting or at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) located in Henrico County.

# My Role….

## I work with clients to empower them to manage all aspects of their chronic diseases independently. This is done by utilizing accessibility devices and technology, tapping into accessibility resources, and using problem solving, organizational and advocacy skills.

## Visits are intermittent and occur either in the home or at the VRCBVI training center located in Richmond, Virginia.

# **1. My insurance won’t pay for a talking glucometer, so I can’t get one.**

## Insurance companies contract with specific manufacturers, so they automatically deny any meter that is not on their list

## Ask your physician to complete a Medical Necessity Form and submit it to your insurance company; reason for talking meter is blindness

## Walmart pharmacy has the ReliOn Premier Voice meter and supplies for a very low price; can be purchased without a prescription; stocked in the store or online

## Accessible Pharmacy provides low-cost Prodigy meters and supplies; call 215-799-9900, or visit <https://www.accessiblepharmacy.com/contact-accessible-pharmacy> or use the Be My Eyes Specialized Help Section app Monday -Friday 10am to 4pm

# **2. I can’t check my blood sugar levels because I can’t see to get the blood onto the strip.**

## Use lighted magnifiers, CCTVs or digital magnifiers

### Freedom Scientific Ruby <https://www.freedomscientific.com/products/lowvision/ruby>

### AFB CCTV/ Video Magnifiers <https://www.afb.org/blindness-and-low-vision/using-technology/assistive-technology-products/video-magnifiers>

# Thumb Guide MethodThis technique helps to ‘milk’ your finger tip by applying slight pressure to the finger pad giving you a greater chance of having a blood sample large enough to test. It also provides a landmark and smaller surface area to explore with your test strip, which increases your chances of locating the blood sample.

## Gather all of your needed diabetes testing supplies

## Wash your hands

## Prepare your lancing device

## Insert monitoring strip into your glucometer

## Place your thumb on the finger pad of the chosen finger (both the finger and thumb are from the same hand) and apply slight pressure

## Place this hand on a hard surface to help stabilize and do not move your thumb until after the blood sample has been obtained

## Using your free hand, pick up your lancing device and place it on your thumb nail and slide it down until it makes contact with the finger pad of the finger you are pricking

## Prick finger and remove lancing device, but do not move your thumb

## Using your free hand, pick up your glucometer and hold it like a pen with the strip facing down. Place the end of the strip on your thumb nail and slide it down until it makes contact with the pad of the finger you just pricked and hold it in place for about 3 seconds

## If a blood sample is not obtained move the end of the strip to another spot, make contact with the finger pad, and hold it in place for about 3 seconds (be sure to not slide the strip on your finger, rather, pick it up and move it to another position on your finger pad)

## Continue steps 9 and 10 until the blood sample is obtained

# **3. I’m too scared to draw up my insulin because I can’t see it.**

## Insulin pens (ask your doctor to order them)

## Safe Shot Loader for fixed dose insulin

### order from Independent Living Aids for $11.95 <https://independentliving.com/safe-shot-syringe-loader-fixed-dose/> or The Chicago Lighthouse <https://www.lighthousetoolsforliving.com/Safe-Shot-Syringe-Loader_p_858.html>

## Count-a-Dose for sliding scale or insulin doses that change

### order from MaxiAids for $69.95, item#50166 <https://www.maxiaids.com/prodigy-count-a-dose-for-the-low-vision-diabetic>

## Use apps to help verify dose (Be My Eyes on all smartphones, Seeing AI on IPhones)

## Use low vision aids to verify dose (CCTV, handheld magnifiers, etc.)

# **4. My family handles my medications. I can’t do it because I can’t see.**

## ScripTalk from Envision America

### Free, reads your prescription labels out loud

### Must use participating pharmacy, visit <https://www.envisionamerica.com/participating-pharmacies>

## Spoken RX at CVS Pharmacies

### Ask your pharmacist to sign you up

## Walgreens Talking Pill Reminder

### Free for those with vision impairments, ask your pharmacist

### If you have trouble getting it, contact Walgreens Customer Service at 1-800-925-4733 ext 4 for assistance. Please also reach out to kimcharlson@acb.org or Lainey Feingold at lf@lflegal.com

## Accessible Pharmacy

### Call 215-799-9900, or visit <https://www.accessiblepharmacy.com/contact-accessible-pharmacy> or use the Be My Eyes Specialized Help Section app Monday -Friday 10am to 4pm

## Talking wands, bump dots, organization

# **5. Low carbohydrate foods are expensive. I am on a fixed income, what am I supposed to do?**

## Research the carbohydrate content in foods to make healthier decisions about food shopping

### Calorie King <https://www.calorieking.com/us/en>

## Shop for low price, low-carbohydrate foods (tuna, chicken, eggs, cheese, peanut butter, whole wheat/grain bread, frozen vegetables, popcorn)

## Buy generic instead of name brands

## Buy in bulk if possible

## Portion control with high carb foods to help manage blood sugar levels and decrease costs

# **6. My doctor said I need to exercise, but I cannot go to a gym. It’s too expensive and I can’t see.**

## Do exercise snacks at home.. They add up!

## Utilize canned goods, empty milk cartons filled with water as weights

## Audio assisted yoga

## Free exercise apps on phone

## Ask your insurance company if they pay for exercise classes and provide transportation

# **Accessible Exercise Videos for at-home, no equipment:**

## Audio described yoga 2 (26:15) <https://youtu.be/cZBT0S95uNU>

## Audio described yoga - 3 - yoga for the visually impaired (24:15) <https://youtu.be/6ZYU2kquG-I>

## Audio described yoga 4 - yoga for the visually impaired (12:00) <https://youtu.be/QZU_iX1fW00>

## Working Out at Home as a Blind or Visually Impaired Person (9:18) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftaJbn5JkpU>

## 5 Exercise Ideas for Blind, Visually Impaired, Low Vision, or Sighted People (11:53) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saw8nD6lOeY>

## Eyes-Free Fitness <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQYzhBhCuK1GoK3CBp0S2c9LivvhasOK0>

# **Do Not Let Blindness Be An Excuse For Not Caring For Your Health**

## Reach out to and join blindness peer groups

### American Council of the Blind (ACB) <https://www.acb.org/peer-support-and-mentoring>

### National Federation of the Blind (NFB) <https://nfb.org/>

### Vision Aware <https://visionaware.org/emotional-support/peer-support-groups-and-other-resources/>

## Utilize the resources available

## Educational videos on DBVI Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/VDBVI>

## **BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!**