

Diabetes: Just the Basics

Self-Monitoring of Blood Sugar (glucose)

Keeping your blood sugar in control is an important part of keeping well when you have diabetes. Checking a drop of blood with a meter lets you know how much sugar is in your blood at the time that you check it. It will help you to see how your medicine, food and activity affect your blood sugar. You will be able to know if your blood sugar is too high or too low and treat the problem right away.

Things that make your blood sugar go up

- Too much food
- Not enough diabetes medicine
- Not enough activity
- Illness and stress

Things that make your blood sugar go down

- Not enough food
- Too much diabetes medicine
- More activity than usual

Use caution when drinking alcohol because it may make your blood sugar go up or down.

Times to check your blood sugar

There is no one plan for everyone when it comes to checking blood sugars. People taking insulin will need to monitor their blood sugar once to many times a day to adjust their doses safely and effectively. Other people may not need to check as often. *You should check your blood sugar on different days of the week and at different times of the day. Talk with your healthcare provider to decide when you should check your blood sugar and fill in the chart below.*

Days and Times I will check my blood sugar			
How many days a week should I check my blood sugar? _____			
What times should I check my blood sugar? (circle times below)			
Before breakfast	Before lunch	Before supper	Before bed
2 hours after breakfast	2 hours after lunch	2 hours after supper	2 – 3 am

Target blood sugar ranges

Your blood sugar is changing all through the day. It may be lower when you first get up and before you eat. It may be higher after you eat or when you are stressed. *Talk with your healthcare provider about your target blood sugar ranges and write them in on the chart below.*

Time	Usual target for most people	My target (write yours here)
Before meals	80 - 120	
2 hours after start of meal	Less than 180	
Bed time	110 - 150	

Watch for patterns

Write down your blood sugar readings on a sheet of paper or in a logbook. This will help you to watch for patterns in your blood sugar. Bring your readings to your medical appointments and review them with your provider. This will help you to identify any problems so you can better manage your blood sugar.

Tips for getting a good blood sample

- Wash your hands with warm water
- Hold your hands downward to increase blood flow to your fingers
- “Milk” your finger to increase blood flow to the tip
- Shake your hands quickly

Possible reasons for errors on blood glucose meters

- Too little blood on strip
- Storing strips outside of the original container or storing the container in a steamy place (like a bathroom)
- The meter is too hot or too cold

Insurance coverage

Most meters are covered by the durable medical benefit. Strips and lancets are covered by the pharmacy benefit. Managed care covers different strips on different tiers. The best way to know what coverage you have is to call the 1-800 number on the back of your insurance card.

Make checking your blood sugar a part of your life!

Steps To Better Health

- Keep the test strips in their container and in a dry place
- Use the side of your finger, not the tip (*the side hurts less!*)



Talk with your healthcare provider about seeing a diabetes educator and/or a dietitian to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.

