

Diabetic Blood Sugar Tests

Testing for Blood Sugar Control

Taking care of your diabetes can make you feel better and stay healthy. Lowering your blood sugar by any amount lessens your chances of getting diabetic eye, kidney and nerve disease. To control your diabetes, you must know your blood sugar numbers. There are two different tests to measure your blood sugar – a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test and a finger-stick test. You need both tests to get a complete picture of your blood sugar control.

Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c)

The HbA1c test shows the average amount of sugar that has been in your blood over the last three months. Your doctor does the test by taking a small sample of your blood and sending it to a lab.

Why should I have a HbA1c test?

A HbA1c test is the best way for your doctor to evaluate if your blood sugar is under control. This test shows if your blood sugar level is normal or too high.

What is a good HbA1c testing goal?

The HbA1c goal for people with diabetes is less than 7 percent. If your test result is less than 7 percent, your treatment plan is probably working and it is likely that your blood sugar is under control.

What happens if my blood sugar level is too high?

A high HbA1c has a result that is greater than 8 percent. A high test result means that you have a greater chance of getting eye disease, kidney disease or nerve damage. If your test result is greater than 8 percent, you may need to work with your doctor to change your treatment plan.

How often do I need this test?

Ask your doctor for a HbA1c test at least two times a year. Get the test more often if your blood sugar stays too high or if your doctor makes any changes in your treatment plan.

Finger-stick Test

The finger-stick test is a simple self-test you can do using a blood glucose meter. A blood glucose meter measures your blood sugar at the time you test.

Why should I do a finger-stick test?

Self-testing helps you see how food, physical activity, and diabetes medicines affect your blood sugar. The readings you get from these tests can help you manage your diabetes day-by-day or even hour-by-hour. Keep a record of your test results and review it with your doctor.

How often should I do this test?

Finger-stick tests are usually done before meals and/or at bedtime. However, you may test your blood sugar using a blood glucose meter as often as needed. Ask your doctor how often he/she recommends you test your blood sugar.

What is a good self-testing goal?

Ideal goals for most people with diabetes when self-testing using a blood glucose meter are:

Before meals – 80-120 mg/dl

At bedtime – 100-140 mg/dl

Your blood sugar goals may be different from these ideal goals. Ask your doctor what goals are best for you.



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