



Testing Your Blood Sugar

Keeping your blood sugar at or near normal levels helps prevent diabetes complications, such as problems with your eyes, kidneys, or feet.

Checking your blood sugar:

- Gives you more flexibility in deciding what to eat and how much exercise you need.
- Lets you know what's working if you've made lifestyle changes.
- Helps you know when it's time to call your doctor.
- Gives your diabetes care team important information to make changes to your treatment.
- Helps you know when to adjust the amount of insulin you need to control your diabetes, if you use insulin.

Talk with your doctor or diabetes care team to learn how to adjust your insulin dose.

Testing tells you how your blood sugar level is affected by your medications, physical activity, stress, illness, and what, how much, and when you eat.

What are blood sugar goals?

Goal for A1C	A1C < 7	A1C < 8
Goal for pre-meal blood sugars	80–130 mg/dL	100–140 mg/dL
Goal for 2 hours after a meal	Less than 180 mg/dL	Less than 200 mg/dL
Goal for bedtime blood sugars	100–160 mg/dL	100–200 mg/dL

How do I check my blood sugar?

1. Review the instructions that came with your meter.
2. Gather all the supplies you need before you test, including meter, test strips, and logbook.
3. Wash your hands with warm water and soap before testing.
4. Prick the side (not the pad) of your fingertip with a lancing device or “penlet.”
5. Apply blood to the test strip according to your meter directions.
6. Record your numbers.

Your blood sugar goals may be different from the ideal A1C goals shown in the table at the top. Ask your doctor or care team what blood sugar goals are best for you.

It's important to know what to do when your blood sugar is either higher or lower than the numbers in the table. You can take one of our diabetes classes to learn more.

When should I test?

Not everyone needs to test their blood sugar the same number of times each day. Ask your doctor or care team what amount of testing is best for you and at what times of the day you should test.

Here are some general guidelines about how often to test.

Test more frequently when you:

- Get sick or have an infection.
- Change diabetes medications or increase the dose of your medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Are trying to get pregnant, or you're already pregnant.
- Don't have good control of your diabetes.

How do I stay safe and comfortable when testing?

Some people feel pain or have a hard time getting enough blood when pricking their fingers. To help with this, follow these tips:

- Prick a different spot or finger each time to reduce redness and soreness in your fingertips.

- Shake your hand up and down or run warm water over your hand before you prick your finger to improve blood flow.
- Ask your doctor or care team about other lancet (pricking) options.
- Don't share your lancing device with others.
- Don't reuse lancets.

More tips for testing your own blood sugar

- Call the number on the back of the LifeScan meter, if you have problems using it.
- Keep test strips in their airtight bottle. This gives you the most accurate results.
- Don't use strips after the expiration date shown on the bottle.

Additional resources

The LifeScan meter booklet and blood sugar logbook are available from your doctor, Health Education Department, or pharmacy. Visit kp.org/mydoctor/diabetes to learn more.