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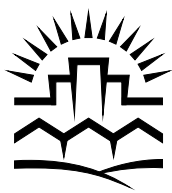
## Take Control of Your Blood Sugar.

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- 1 Ask your health care provider for a hemoglobin A1c test at least twice a year.
- 2 Ask your health care provider what your hemoglobin A1c number is and what it means.
- 3 Test your blood sugar as often as needed.
- 4 Talk to your health care provider about your blood sugar goals for the hemoglobin A1c test and for testing your own blood sugar.
- 5 Get regular physical activity, take prescribed medicines and eat foods to keep your blood sugar under control. See a dietitian or a diabetes educator to create a meal plan that is right for you.
- 6 For more information, call 1-800-438-5383 or visit the web site at <http://ndep.nih.gov> on the Internet.




Control your  
diabetes.  
*For Life.*



NATIONAL  
**DIABETES  
EDUCATION**  
PROGRAM

Sponsored by the National Diabetes Education Program, a partnership among the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and over 200 organizations. NIH Publication No. 98-4350 (NDEP 10, revised March 2000).



# If You Have Diabetes, Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers

**T**aking control of your diabetes can help you feel better and stay healthy. Lowering your blood sugar (also called blood glucose) by any amount reduces your chances of having eye, kidney, and nerve problems. Knowing your blood sugar numbers will help you control your diabetes.

**There are two different tests to measure your blood sugar:**

- 1 The **hemoglobin A1c test** (pronounced Hē'mě-glō'bĭn A-one-C) measures your blood sugar control **over the last 3 months**. It is the **best way** to know if your blood sugar is under control.
- 2 A **blood sugar test you do yourself**, using a drop of blood and a meter, measures your blood sugar at the time you test.

**You need both tests to get a complete picture of your blood sugar control.**

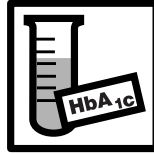
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## The Hemoglobin A1c Test: The Best Test for Long-Term Diabetes Control

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### What is the hemoglobin A1c test?

The hemoglobin A1c test (also called H-B-A-one-C or **A-1-C**) is a **simple lab test** that shows how well you have controlled your blood sugar **over the last 3 months**. Your health care provider takes a small blood sample for testing.



### Why should I have a hemoglobin A1c test?

The **hemoglobin A1c** test is the best test for you and your health care provider to know if your blood sugar is under control. This test shows if your blood sugar has been close to normal or too high.

### What is a good hemoglobin A1c testing goal?

The hemoglobin **A1c goal** for most people with diabetes is **less than 7 percent**. If your number is less than 7 percent, your treatment plan is probably working and it is likely that your blood sugar is under good control. You and your health care provider should discuss the best goal for you.

A hemoglobin A1c number **higher than 8 percent** means that you have a greater chance of getting eye disease, kidney disease, or nerve damage. Any lowering of the hemoglobin A1c number toward your goal can help reduce your chances of getting these problems. If your number is higher than 8 percent, **ask your health care provider how you can bring your number down.**

### How often do I need this test?

Ask your health care provider for a hemoglobin A1c test **at least twice a year**. Get the test more often if your blood sugar stays too high or if your treatment plan changes.

### What about home testing for hemoglobin A1c?

Home testing for hemoglobin A1c is now possible and some people with diabetes may find it helpful to use this test. Be sure to follow the instructions and **discuss your results with your health care provider.**

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## Testing Your Own Blood Sugar: The Best Test For Day-To-Day Diabetes Control

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### Why should I do this test?

Self-testing helps you see how food, physical activity, and diabetes medicine 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 health care provider.

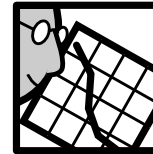
### How do I test my own blood sugar?

Use a drop of blood and a meter to measure how much sugar is in your blood. This simple test tells you what your blood sugar is at the time you test.



### What is a good self-testing blood sugar goal?

**Set your goals with your health care provider.** Ideal goals for most people with diabetes when self-testing are:



Before Meal	80-120 mg/dl
At Bedtim	100-140 mg/dl

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

### How often should I do this test?

Self-tests are usually done **before meals and/or at bedtime**. Ask your health care provider when and how often you need to test your blood sugar.

### If I test my own blood sugar, do I still need the hemoglobin A1c test?

Yes. The results of each test help you and your health care provider to manage your diabetes. You need both tests to get a complete picture of your blood sugar control.

### Does my insurance pay for self-testing supplies and education?

At least 37 states have laws that require insurance companies to cover self-testing supplies and diabetes education. Check your coverage with your insurance plan. Medicare covers most of the cost of diabetes test strips, lancets, and blood glucose meters for people with diabetes. If you are covered by Medicare, ask your health care provider or pharmacist for details.