

Blood Glucose Monitoring

Why Monitor?

Blood glucose monitoring shows your current blood glucose (sugar) level. High blood glucose over a long time may cause problems with your heart, eyes, kidneys, nerves, or feet. When you don't monitor blood glucose, it's like driving down the street with your windshield covered up. You can't see where you're going, and you're likely to have an accident and get hurt.

Monitoring shows how food, medicine, exercise, and stress affect your blood glucose. Ask your medical team how often to check your blood glucose level. They will also help you decide the target range in which most of your blood glucose readings should fall.

Your medical team will help you see patterns in your blood glucose levels. If a reading at a certain time of day is often out of the target range, you can figure out how to control it. No reading is good or bad. It is just in or out of the target range.

How to Monitor

There are several different monitors. Your medical team will show you the benefits of each. Testing is similar for most of them:

1. Make sure the meter is clean and calibrated (if needed) correctly.
2. Wash your hands with warm water. Dry well. Massage your hand to get blood into your finger. Don't use alcohol. It dries the skin too much.
3. Use a lancet device to prick your finger. Working from the base of the finger, gently squeeze a small amount of blood onto the test strip. Place the strip in the meter.
4. After a few seconds, the reading will appear. Write it down in your diabetes record book. Add a note about anything that made the reading out of your target range.
5. Dispose of the lancet and strip as recommended by your local sanitation department.

Have someone else learn how to check your blood glucose. You don't want to teach someone how to use a monitor when you are sick.

Take your monitor and blood glucose records to every visit with your medical team. Have them check to see that your monitor and your method for using it are correct. If you monitor correctly, you will save time and money.

Other Things to Watch

Your doctor may want you to check your urine for ketones if you are sick or if your blood glucose is too high. Not everyone has to do this.

The doctor may also order an A1C test during your checkups. This test shows how well your blood glucose has been controlled over the last 2–3 months. Along with your daily monitoring, it helps your doctor know if your current diabetes treatment is working.

Other lab tests may also be needed. These tests help pick up any health problems early so that they can be treated.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

1. What is my target blood glucose range? _____

2. How often should I check my blood glucose? _____

3. Are there patterns that show I need to change my diabetes treatment? _____
