



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

Checking your blood sugar puts you in charge of your diabetes by giving you important information that you can track over time.

Testing tells you how different things affect your blood sugar level, such as:

what, how much, & when you eat      physical activity

your medications      stress or illness

Checking your blood sugar gives you more flexibility in making decisions about what to eat and how much exercise you need. If you have made changes to your habits, it also tells you what worked or didn't work and lets you know when it's time to call your doctor. Your doctor or other health care professional can use this important information to make needed changes in your treatment.

If you use insulin, testing can help you learn when to adjust the amount of insulin you need for optimal control of your diabetes.

Talk with your doctor or other health care professional to learn how to make adjustments to your insulin dose.

### How do I check my blood sugar?

1. Review the booklet that came with your meter.
2. Gather together all the supplies you need before you test: meter, test strips, logbook, etc.
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. Write down the blood sugar numbers in your logbook.

Your blood sugar goals may be different from the ideal A1c goals shown in the table at left. Ask your doctor or other health care professional what blood sugar goals are best for you. It is very important to know what actions to take when your blood sugar number is either higher or lower than the numbers in the table. You may want to take a diabetes class to learn more.

Not everyone needs to test his or her blood sugar the same number of times each day. **Ask your doctor or other health care professional what amount of testing is best for you and at what times of the day you will need to test.** Here are

Goal for A1C	A1C < 7	A1C < 8
Goal for pre-meal blood sugars	80–130 mg/dL	100–160 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

some general guidelines about how often to test.

**You may be asked to test more often when you are:**

- sick or have an infection
- changing your diabetes medications or increasing the dose of your medications with your doctor or other health care professional
- considering becoming pregnant, or you are pregnant
- not in good control of your diabetes

**Safety and comfort**

Some people feel pain or have a hard time getting enough blood when pricking their fingers. Here are some ideas to help make it easier:

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

- To get more blood flowing to your fingertips, shake your hand up and down or run warm water over your hand before you prick your finger.
- Ask your doctor or other health care professional about other lancet options.
- Don't share your lancing device with others.
- Don't reuse lancets.

**More tips for testing your own blood sugar**

- If you have problems with your LifeScan meter, call the number on the back.
- For accurate results, keep test strips in their airtight bottle and do not use strips after the expiration date shown on the bottle.

**Other resources**

The LifeScan meter booklet and blood sugar logbook are available from your doctor, other health care professional, local Health Education Center, or pharmacy.

- Visit [kp.org/mydoctor/diabetes](http://kp.org/mydoctor/diabetes) for day-to-day tips and tricks on how to manage your diabetes.
- Visit your doctor's home page at [kp.org/mydoctor](http://kp.org/mydoctor) to find reliable health information, view your medical record, check lab results, email your doctor, and much more.
- Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.
- If you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health, including your diabetes. There is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or connect to [ndvh.org](http://ndvh.org).