



Diabetes Wellness Newsletter

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HEALTHY LIVING WITH BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITORING AND MEAL PLANNING

Monitoring blood sugar levels is a critical step in diabetes management. There are several measurement tools available to help you achieve your personal glucose goals. **Hemoglobin A1c; finger stick blood sugar checks** and now **Continuous Glucose Monitoring** devices help to give insight into how your body is responding to your diet, exercise, medication/s and stress.

The importance of glucose management cannot be understated.

Years of research has proven a greater level of glucose control over a longer period leads to a significant reduction in long term complications.

Goal setting is critical in self-management and should be individualized and measurable in collaboration with your health care team. Using today's technology and understanding the outcome of your hard work overtime by monitoring glucose levels will allow you to see the efforts through glucose stability.

In this newsletter, you will learn about these different ways to measure your blood sugar, as well as some valuable meal planning ideas. Thank you for letting us be part of your health journey and be well!



DIABETES WELLNESS CONTRIBUTORS:

Carmen Eucker, RN, CDCES, Diabetes Educator
Debbie McGinnis, RN, CDCES, Diabetes Coordinator
Sarah Fulkerson, Registered Dietitian, CDCES
Breann Hogie, Registered Dietitian
Sarah Hazen, Scheduler
Arla Shephard Bull, Marketing Coordinator, Editor

HEMOGLOBIN A1C



A1C

The A1C measurement is expressed as a percentage reflecting the average blood glucose concentration over 90-120 days. Glucose in plasma attaches to hemoglobin in the red blood cells. The higher the blood sugar levels are during that time, the higher the A1C value. A1C measures long-term glycemic control and is the standard for determining therapy options and need for adjustments.

Monitoring treatment

A simple blood draw will be done to assess your A1C level. Your provider will tell you how often you need the A1C test, but usually you'll have the test at least twice a year if you're meeting your treatment goals. If you're not meeting your goals, you may need to get an A1C test more often.

A1C Targets

When it comes to the numbers, there's no one-size-fits-all target. A1C target levels can vary by each person's age and other factors, and your target may be different from someone else's. The goal for most adults with diabetes is an A1C that is less than 7 percent.

The A1C test can also be used for diagnosis, based on the following guidelines:



- If your A1C level is between 5.7 and less than 6.5%, your levels have been in the prediabetes range.
- If you have an A1C level of 6.5% or higher, your levels were in the diabetes range.

BLOOD GLUCOSE/SUGAR MONITORING

Blood sugar (blood glucose) monitoring is the primary tool in assessing your blood glucose levels. It is a point-in-time measurement, versus a measurement of overall glucose control that A1C measures. While there is no specific frequency, recommendations are usually made depending upon medication regimes. Using medications that have a powerful effect on blood sugar like insulin and some oral drugs may require more frequent blood sugar checks. Self-monitoring of blood sugar can aid in decision making related to eating patterns and food choices. Checking blood sugar levels in pairs before and after meals can provide insight for problem-solving.

It's important for blood sugar levels to stay in a healthy range generally recommended between 70-180. Tracking your blood sugar over time can allow you to look at trends and identify changes that need to be addressed with your provider or diabetes team.

There are many different meters available on the market today. Your insurance may determine which specific device you will use but all blood glucose meters work similarly. A small drop of blood is placed on a test strip with results available within 3-7 seconds. Your diabetes educator can assist you in learning the best technique for testing.



CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORING



A newer way to look at measuring glucose control is through technology called continuous glucose monitoring (CGM). CGM devices track glucose levels every few minutes 24 hours per day through a small sensor inserted in the subcutaneous tissue.

This method of glucose tracking can offer a more complete picture of what is happening with the glucose level throughout the day using trend arrows. Individuals can see the effect of medications, food and activity quickly and

make necessary adjustments or by tracking this data over time to develop better understanding of the impact of lifestyle.

As noted in the ACDES "In Practice" publication, "CGM is not without limitations including cost considerations, appropriate selection and training." It is best to work with your provider or diabetes educator to discuss the options available and which device might work best for your individual needs.

MEAL PLANNING AND TIPS:

Dietary choices play an essential role in blood sugar management and lowering your A1C. Changing up your eating patterns can seem intimidating but with some added thought and awareness of the foods you consume, you will begin to feel more comfortable and confident in your food choices.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Many people approach their new eating habits intensely, eliminating entire food groups and labeling certain foods as "bad." This over-restriction can deprive you of food you love. A consistent carb plan is about longevity. A treat every once in a while may be reflected in your immediate blood glucose reading but not the A1C. Remember, A1C is "big picture." Rework favorite foods to make them fit your new meal plan.

QUALITY OF CARBS

Because carbohydrates break down into sugars, they have the greatest impact on your blood glucose level. Choose higher fiber and complex carbohydrates like whole grains, beans, lentils, and fruits to slow the absorption of carbohydrates to prevent sudden spikes.



CREATE YOUR PLATE

- Fill **half** of your plate with non-starchy vegetables
- Fill a **quarter** of your plate with a lean protein
- Fill the last **quarter** with a high-fiber, carbohydrate-rich food
- Include plant-based fats in small amounts

SAMPLE MENU FOR 10 CARB SERVINGS (150 G/DAY)

- **Breakfast:** whole-wheat English muffin (2 carbs), egg or egg whites, thin slice of cheese, sliced tomato and spinach leaves
- **Snack:** 1 small apple (1 carb) sliced and dipped in 2 tbsp melted peanut butter
- **Lunch:** ½ cup hummus (1 carb), carrots, celery, cucumber, pita bread (1 carb), 1 cup mushroom barley soup (1 carb)
- **Snack:** 1 cup blueberries (1 carb), ½ cup low fat cottage cheese
- **Dinner:** 2 four-inch diameter corn tortillas (1 carb), ½ cup beans (1 carb), 3-4 oz ground turkey, cooked bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, 1 tbsp plain Greek yogurt or avocado
- **Snack:** 3 cups popcorn (1 carb) topped with a few shakes of popcorn seasoning or nutritional yeast

To reach Diabetes Wellness, contact 360-427-7332.



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