

Monitoring Your Blood Glucose



Checking your **blood glucose** often can:

- Help you maintain a healthy blood glucose level
- Show you how your activities, foods and drinks, and medicines affect your blood glucose level

You should be able to get a glucose monitor (glucometer), with the help of your doctor.



What can **raise** blood glucose?

- Stress
- Excess carbohydrate intake
- Illness
- Side effects from medication
- Decreased activity/exercise
- Hormonal changes
- Dehydration

What can **lower** blood glucose?

- Decreased food intake, especially carbohydrates (such as skipping a meal)
- Increased activity/exercise
- Alcohol intake
- Taking too much diabetes medication or insulin

What supplies do I need to check my **blood glucose**?

- **Glucometer:** A medical device that measures how much glucose is in your blood. Also called a glucose meter.
- **Lancets:** small, needle-like objects you will use to prick your finger and get a drop of blood.
- **Lancet Device:** the piece that holds your lancet in place.
- **Test strips:** small papers that you will place a drop of blood on to check your glucose. Make sure they are kept on their container and at room temperature.

How do I check my **blood glucose**?

1 Gather your supplies.
Make sure to have your glucometer, lancets (needle), lancet device, and test strips.

2 Wash your hands.
Wet your hands, lather with warm water and soap. Scrub for at least 20 seconds. Rinse and dry.

3 Put the lancet into the lancet device.
Push it until it clicks. Twist off the needle cover to reveal the small needle that will prick your finger.

4 Put the test strip into your glucometer.
This will turn on the meter as long as it is in the right way.

5 Get a drop of blood to test.
Put the lancet device on the side of your fingertip. Press the button to prick your finger.

6 Put your blood on the test strip.
Put your finger against the test strip. Make sure you have a drop big enough for the test strip to read. To get more blood, you can press the bottom of your finger.

7 Wait for your results.
Your blood glucose level should come up on the screen.

8 Write down your results in a log.
Make sure you write down: your blood glucose level, date and time you took your blood glucose, and information like when you last ate or exercised.

9 Throw away the used lancet.
Make sure to put it in a sturdy container such as a coffee can or detergent bottle, where it cannot poke anyone. Use a new one each time.

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Hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) is defined as a blood glucose of 70 mg/dl or below, but it can happen at higher glucose levels depending on the person. It's important to look for the symptoms, check your blood glucose, and treat it before blood glucose gets down to a dangerously low level. If you aren't sure or are concerned your blood glucose is too high or low, contact your doctor.

Symptoms: Shakiness, Dizziness, Confusion, Fast heartbeat, Weakness, Irritability, Hunger, Tingling, Sweating, Cold/clammy skin, Blurry vision

What should I do if my blood glucose is too low?

To correct a low blood glucose, use the Rule of 15:

1. Eat or drink one serving (**15 grams**) of a quick-acting carbohydrate such as:



A half a cup (4 ounces) of juice or regular soda



5 or 6 hard candies or small handful of jellybeans (NOT sugar-free)



1 Tablespoon of honey, sugar, or syrup. Or glucose tablets- go by the directions on the bottle

2. Then wait for **15 minutes** and re-check your blood glucose. If it is still too low, have another serving of quick-acting carbohydrates, wait 15 minutes and re-check blood glucose.

How can my doctor help me manage my blood glucose?

It's important to visit your doctor regularly so they can help you figure out how to best manage your diabetes.

When you go to the doctor, you should take:

- **Your blood glucose log or glucometer.** *Your doctor will want to look at your results.*
- **A list of the medicines you take.**
- **A food journal or food diary if you have one.** *If you do not, be ready to talk about any changes you have made to the food you eat.*
- **A list of questions for your doctor, if you have any.** *Before you leave the doctor's office, make sure you know:*
 - When your doctor wants you to check your blood glucose
 - What your blood glucose level should be
 - What medicines you should take and the foods you should eat
 - What you should do if you have problems with your diabetes
 - When you should come back for another visit
- **This will allow your doctor to see if you need to make any changes to your eating, exercise, or medicine.**

What else do I need to know about supplies?



- Test strips are sensitive to temperature and light. **Avoid** keeping them in a place where they will get **too hot or too cold**.
- Be aware of the expiration date on the test strip container. **Test strips that are expired may not be accurate**, so they are not recommended to use.
- If you need assistance getting supplies, speak with your doctor, pharmacist, or diabetes educator.