

Tracking my progress

When it comes to managing diabetes, how do you measure your progress? It really depends on your goals. Do you have a certain blood sugar number you want to reach? Is your goal to have more energy to do the things you enjoy? The answer may vary for each person with diabetes. No matter your goal, have a plan to help you reach it. Use a checklist as a guide to help you decide which steps to take next.

Blood sugar checks

Checking your blood sugar on your own is a crucial step. It can be done using a hand-held device called a glucometer. This is also called a meter. Your blood sugar level shows up as a number on the meter screen. Knowing how your blood sugar changes after a meal helps you choose the best foods. It can also show you how well your diabetes pills or insulin is working. The chart below shows target blood sugar ranges for adults with diabetes:

Blood sugar control

Blood sugar before a meal	70 - 130 mg/dl (5.0 - 7.2 mmol/l)
Blood sugar after a meal	<180 mg/dl (<10.0 mmol/l)
A1C	<7.0%

Here are some other things to consider:

- Do you check your blood sugar as often as your doctor directed?
- Do you have a meter and the other supplies you need for testing?
- Are you comfortable using your meter and taking diabetes medicines?
- Do you keep a log of your blood sugar test results?

If you answered yes to all of those questions, you're doing great! If not, it may be time to review the diabetes care plan you and your health care team created. This will help you know how often to check your blood sugar. Your doctor can help you get all the tools you need to test your blood sugar. Also, bring your meter the next time you have doctor appointment. Ask the

doctor or nurse to show you how to use it. Write down your test results each time you check your blood sugar. Keep your log with your meter.

Who should check?

Anyone with diabetes can benefit from doing blood sugar checks. It is extra important for those who:

- Take insulin or diabetes pills
- Are pregnant
- Have a hard time controlling blood sugar levels
- Have severe low blood sugar levels or ketones from high blood sugar levels
- Have low blood sugar levels without the usual warning signs

The A1c test

The A1c test is another important tool to help you and your health care team check your progress. Your score is measured by a blood test that is ordered by your doctor. Your A1c result shows your average blood sugar levels for the past three months. This is different than the tests you do at home each day. It is usually done two to four times a year. The A1c test is not meant to replace your daily blood sugar self-testing.

The A1c goal for most people with diabetes is less than 7 percent. Almost half of adults with diabetes have an A1c of 7 percent or higher. You can use the A1c converter to see how your A1c number compares to your daily blood sugar test results.

Support to help you manage your diabetes:

- We can help you talk to your family or caregiver about your diabetes.
- We can assist you in finding community programs and resources in your area
- Tips to talk with your doctor and get the most out of your visit:
 1. Ask any questions you may have about your diabetes. You can write them down and take them with you to your visit.
 2. Follow your doctor's advice. If you have questions or concerns, let your doctor know.
 3. Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you're taking.

Important screenings:

- Depression
- Other health conditions
- Preventive care screenings such as wellness checkups, mammograms and Pap tests

More diabetes resources

- [American Diabetes Association](#)
- [Children with DIABETES Online Community](#)
- [Diabetes Health](#)

Sources:

*American Diabetes Association
diabetes.org

*Diabetes Health
diabeteshealth.com

*American Heart Association Diabetes Subpage
heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Diabetes/Diabetes_UCM_001091_SubHomePage.jsp,
accessed November 8, 2013.

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