

HEALTH EDUCATION

In order to manage your diabetes, you will need to check your blood sugar (glucose) on a regular schedule. This is important because:

- Your blood sugar levels can alert you and your doctor that you may need a change in treatment or that you need to adjust your food choices or portions.
- By keeping your blood sugar in the target range as much as possible, you can help prevent health problems related to diabetes, such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney, foot, or eye problems.
- Patterns in blood sugar levels over several days are more helpful than a single blood sugar result. You will learn if there are certain times of the day when your blood sugar tends to run high or low.

Glucose Meter

You will use a glucose meter to check your blood sugar level. There are many different brands of meters at different prices. Call your insurance company first to find out which brands are covered and how to obtain a meter and supplies.

Other Supplies

- Test strips – You will likely get a supply with your meter, but you will need to purchase more. The strips need to be specific for your type of meter.

- Lancing device and lancets – These are used to prick a finger to obtain a small drop of blood.

Know Your Target Range

Your doctor or diabetes educator will tell you what your target range should be.

- My **target range** before a meal should be between _____ and _____.
- My **target range** _____ hours after the first bite of a meal should be between _____ and _____.

When to Check

Your doctor will tell you how often and when you should check your blood sugar.

I need to check my blood sugar _____ times a day:

- Before breakfast.
- _____ hours after the first bite of breakfast.
- Before lunch.
- _____ hours after the first bite of lunch.
- Before dinner.
- _____ hours after the first bite of dinner.
- Before bed.

How to Check Your Blood Sugar

1. Learn how your meter works.

- Follow the instructions that come with the brand of meter that you are using.
- For help, call the 1-800 telephone number on the back of the meter. You may also find it helpful to check the manufacturer's website.
- Keep the meter manual with your meter to help you troubleshoot any problems.

2. Clean your hands.

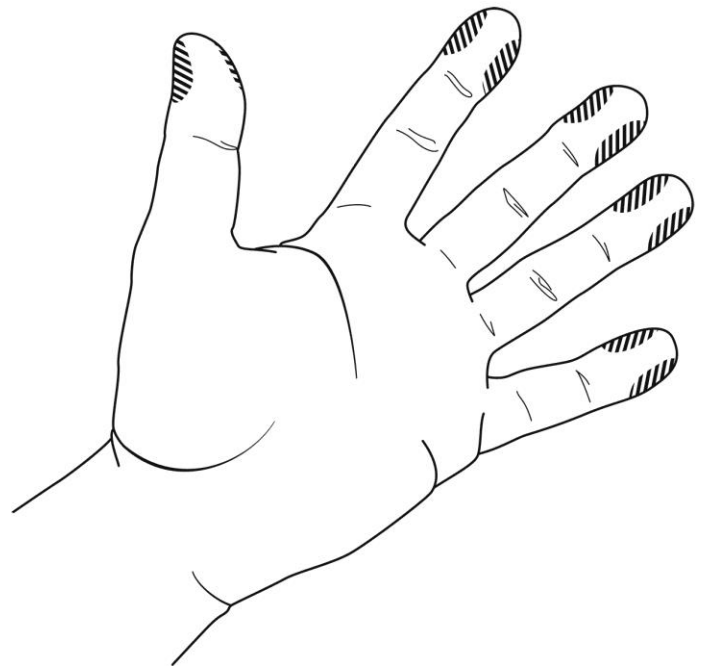
- Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 15 seconds. Rinse and dry.
- Do not use fruit scented soap or sanitizer. They are known to give false readings.
- If you use hand sanitizer or alcohol, wipe away the first drop of blood and use the second drop to test blood sugar.
- Be aware that alcohol is very drying on your skin.

3. Get a sample of blood.

- Most lancing devices are adjustable so you can dial up for a deep stick (a larger drop of blood) or down for a shallower stick (a smaller drop of blood).
- If your lancing device is adjustable, first set it to mid-range.
- The setting you need depends on the thickness of your skin and how easily you bleed. You can increase or

decrease the setting the next time to obtain more or less blood.

- Before pricking your finger, allow your arm to swing back and forth or shake your hand gently a few times to get the blood circulating well.
- To help prevent sore fingers, alternate fingers on both hands. Avoid fingers with calluses.
- Prick the side of your finger – not past the first knuckle. You will bleed easier and have less pain.
- To get a drop of blood, stroke your finger towards the end and press gently without pinching tightly.



4. Dispose of lancets safely.

- Carefully remove lancet from the lancing device and put into a sharps container.

- You can buy a sharps container at a pharmacy. You can also make a sharps container from a puncture-proof container with a lid, such as an empty test strip bottle or a plastic laundry detergent bottle.
- Label the container "Sharps." When the container is about $\frac{3}{4}$ full, follow your community guidelines for proper disposal of sharps containers. Call your local trash or public health department for information. Do not reuse sharps containers.
- Be prepared when leaving home. Always carry a small, travel-size sharps disposal container in case other options are not available.

Track Your Results

- Write your blood sugar results in your log book or blood sugar diary.
- Share your results with your doctor, diabetes educator, and/or nurse.
- Contact your doctor if your blood sugar is greater than 250 for several tests in a row.