

The power
to control diabetes
is in your hands.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services

HCFA
MEDICARE • MEDICAID
Health Care Financing Administration



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Why should I control my diabetes?

To feel better and stay healthy. **Ask your doctor or health care provider if regular blood sugar testing is right for you.**

Lowering your blood sugar by any amount reduces your chances of having eye, kidney, and nerve problems. You can avoid these problems when you control your diabetes.

Why should I test my blood sugar?

To know your blood sugar levels. Your diet, medicines, physical activity, sickness and stress can affect your blood sugar levels.

Knowing your blood sugar levels will help you control your diabetes. This information will also help you and your doctor or health care provider make changes to your diabetes treatment plan.



How do I test my blood sugar?

There is a blood sugar test that you can do on your own. You do not have to go to the doctor's or health care provider's office to do it.

To test your own blood sugar, stick your finger with a lancet (a device to get a drop of blood). Squeeze your finger to get a small drop of blood. Place the drop of blood on a test strip. Insert the test strip into your blood sugar meter. The meter will give you a number. This number is your blood sugar level.

There are many types of blood sugar meters. There are meters that help people who have trouble with their vision, and other meters that take blood samples from parts of the body other than your finger. Each meter works differently. Be sure to read the instructions on your meter. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, diabetes educator or another health care provider to teach you the correct way to use your meter.

Ask your doctor or health care provider to teach you how to use your meter.



What should my blood sugar levels be?

Good blood sugar levels can vary from person to person. Ask your doctor or health care provider about the blood sugar levels that are right for you.

Good blood sugar levels are usually in the following ranges:

- **80-120 mg/dl on waking and before meals**
- **180 or less – 2 hours after meals**
- **100-140 mg/dl at bedtime**

Ask your doctor or health care provider when to check your blood sugar.

What should I do with the results of my blood sugar test?

Ask your doctor or health care provider to give you a journal or log to record your test results. Write down when you take the test and your blood sugar number. Make a note of things that seem to change your blood sugar results, such as eating too much or being sick. Use the results in your journal to make changes to your diet and physical activity as needed.

Share your blood sugar results with your doctor or health care provider. Your results will help you and your health care provider make a plan for keeping your diabetes in control. Ask your doctor or health care provider what to do if your blood sugar numbers are higher or lower than your ideal level. Your health care provider may suggest changes to your diet, physical activity and your medicines.

Call your doctor if your blood sugar numbers are higher or lower than your ideal levels for 2 to 3 days.

What can affect my blood sugar levels?

Things that make blood sugar too HIGH:

- Eating more than usual
- Eating foods that have a high sugar content
- Exercising less than usual
- Stress
- Sickness
- Taking certain medicines
- Forgetting to take your diabetes medicines

Things that make blood sugar too LOW:

- Eating less than usual
- Exercising more than usual
- For insulin users, taking more insulin than needed
- Delaying or skipping a meal

Here are some questions you can ask your doctor or health care provider about testing your blood sugar:

- How can I control my diabetes?

- Should regular testing be part of my diabetes care plan?

- How often should I test my blood sugar?

- What are my ideal blood sugar levels? What levels are too high or too low for me?

- What should my blood sugar level be before I eat? What should it be before I go to bed? What about two hours after I eat?

What is the correct way to use my meter?

What should I do if my readings are too high or too low?

Are there classes I can take to learn more about controlling my diabetes?

Doctor's name and phone number



Medicare covers your diabetes self-testing equipment and supplies.

Medicare covers blood sugar meters, test strips, and lancets (devices to stick your finger).

In the Original Medicare Plan, also known as “fee-for-service” Medicare, you only have to pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount after the Part B deductible. If you are in a Medicare health plan, check with the plan about whether there is a co-payment. Either way, remember that Medicare helps pay for part of the cost of your diabetes equipment and supplies.



To get your diabetes equipment and supplies under Medicare, you need a prescription from your doctor.

The prescription should say:

- You have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- How many test strips and lancets you need in a month.
- What kind of meter you need. For example, if you need a special meter for vision problems, the doctor should say that and state the medical reason why you need a special meter.
- Whether you use insulin or not.
- How often you should test your blood sugar.



Keep in mind:

- ✓ You can pick up your supplies at your pharmacy, hospital, or clinic.
- ✓ You can also order them from a medical equipment supplier. But **YOU** must order them.
- ✓ **YOU** must request refills of diabetes supplies. **Do not accept automatic shipments from suppliers, otherwise Medicare will not pay.**
- ✓ You will need a new prescription from your doctor for your lancets and strips every six months.

If you receive blood sugar meters, test strips, or lancets from a supplier without ordering them, Medicare will not pay the cost.

Points to Remember

- Ask your doctor or health care provider if regular blood sugar testing is right for you.**
- You need a prescription from your doctor to get your diabetes equipment and supplies under Medicare.
- Learn the correct way to use your blood sugar meter properly. Your pharmacist, doctor, diabetes educator or another health care provider can help you.
- Keep track of your blood sugar readings and share them with your doctor or health care provider at regular visits.
- Do not accept shipments of diabetes equipment and supplies that you did not ask for.

Control your
diabetes
For Life.



For free information about diabetes, contact:

National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)

1 Diabetes Way

Bethesda, MD 20892-3600

1-800-438-5383

<http://ndep.nih.gov>

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)

1 Information Way

Bethesda, MD 20892-3560

301-654-3327

301-907-8906 (fax)

**[http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/diabetes/
diabetes.htm](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/diabetes/diabetes.htm)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NCCDPHP, Division of Diabetes Translation

4770 Budford Highway, NE MS K10

Atlanta, GA 30341-3717

1-877-232-3422

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>

For free information about Medicare's
coverage of diabetes supplies, contact:

Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

Center for Beneficiary Services

7500 Security Boulevard

Baltimore, MD 21244

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), available

in English and Spanish

TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048

<http://www.medicare.gov>

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that happens when your body cannot properly process the glucose (a form of sugar) in your blood into energy. Diabetes means that your blood sugar is too high. A high blood sugar level is not good for your health.

Knowing the blood sugar levels that are right for you will help control your diabetes.

