

Managing your blood glucose management

What is blood glucose?

Blood glucose (sugar) is the amount of glucose in your blood at a given time.

Why should you regularly check your blood glucose levels?

Checking your blood glucose levels will:

- ◆ provide a quick measurement of your blood glucose level at a given time;
- ◆ determine if you have a high or low blood glucose level at a given time;
- ◆ show you how your lifestyle and medication affect your blood glucose levels; and
- ◆ help you and your diabetes healthcare team to make lifestyle and medication changes that will improve your blood glucose levels.



How do you test your blood glucose levels?

A blood glucose meter is used to test your blood glucose at home. These meters can be purchased at most pharmacies. Talk with your diabetes educator or pharmacist about which model is right for you. Once you purchase a meter, ensure you receive the proper training before you begin to use it.

Ask your diabetes educator about:

- ◆ the size of the drop of blood needed;
- ◆ the type of blood glucose strips to use;
- ◆ how to clean the meter;
- ◆ how to check if the meter is accurate; and
- ◆ how to code your meter.

Note: Your province or territory may subsidize the cost of blood glucose monitoring supplies. Contact your local Canadian Diabetes Association branch to find out if this applies to you.

How do you keep your blood glucose levels within their target range?

If you have diabetes, you should try to keep your blood glucose as close to target range as possible. This will help to delay or prevent complications of diabetes. Maintaining healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle, and taking medication, if necessary, will help you keep your blood glucose levels within their target range. Target ranges for blood glucose can vary. It depends on a person's age, medical condition and other risk factors. Targets for pregnant women and children 12 years of age and under are different. Ask your doctor what your levels should be.



Managing your blood glucose when you're ill

When you are sick, your blood glucose levels may fluctuate and be unpredictable. During these times, it is a good idea to test your blood glucose levels every two to four hours. It is also very important that you continue to take your diabetes medication. If you have a cold or flu and are considering using a cold remedy or cough syrup, ask your pharmacist to help you make a good choice. Since many cold remedies and cough syrups contain sugar, try to pick sugar-free products.

When you are sick it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you:

- ◆ drink plenty of extra sugar-free fluids or water; try to avoid coffee, tea and colas as they contain caffeine, which may cause you to lose more fluids.
- ◆ replace solid food with fluids that contain glucose, if you can't eat according to your usual meal plan;
- ◆ try to consume 15 grams of carbohydrate every hour;
- ◆ call your doctor or go to an emergency room if you vomit and/or have had diarrhea two times or more in four hours; and
- ◆ if you are on insulin, be sure to continue taking it while you are sick. Check with your healthcare team about guidelines for insulin adjustment during an illness.

Recommended blood glucose targets for people with diabetes*

	A1C**	Fasting blood glucose/ blood glucose <i>before</i> meals (mmol/L)	Blood glucose two hours <i>after</i> eating (mmol/L)
Target for most people with diabetes	≤7.0%	4.0 to 7.0	5.0 to 10.0
Normal range	≤6.0%	4.0 to 6.0	5.0 to 8.0

* This information is based on the *Canadian Diabetes Association 2008 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Diabetes in Canada* and is a guide. Talk to your doctor about YOUR blood glucose target ranges.

** A1C is a blood test that indicates an average of your overall blood glucose levels over the past 120 days. A1C targets for pregnant women and children 12 years of age and under are different.

The Canadian Diabetes Association works in communities across the country to promote the health of Canadians and eliminate diabetes through our strong nationwide network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers, partners and supporters. In the struggle against this global epidemic, our expertise is recognized around the world. The Canadian Diabetes Association: setting the world standard.

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 **Canadian Diabetes Association**