

Class Two

Getting Your Glucometer to Work for You



Objectives

In this class, you will:

- Identify three ways to monitor your blood glucose (sugar)
- Understand how to use your glucometer
- Practice checking your blood sugar
- Identify desired values when checking your blood sugar
- Troubleshoot values that are too high or too low
- Discuss challenges to checking your blood sugar
- Identify resilience resources to overcome the challenges to checking your blood sugar



GROUP DISCUSSION

Growing Your Resilience Resources

Finding Positive Meaning – Thinking about the positive things associated with diabetes.

Coping Strategies – Thoughts and behaviors that enable you to cope effectively with diabetes (e.g., engaging in enjoyable activities; asking for help; support from family, friends, and significant others; spiritual/faith practices).

Managing Your Emotions – Awareness and acceptance of your emotions. Balancing positive and negative emotions and expressing your emotions in a healthy way.

Using Stress to Grow – To persevere and adapt in the face of stress and adversity.

Building Self-Confidence – Confidence in managing diabetes even when you are stressed.

Since our last meeting, think of a time when you used one of your resilience resources. Share how it helped you. (think of at least 1 thing, write it down)



GROUP DISCUSSION

What Are Your Challenges to Checking Your Blood Sugar?

(think of at least 1 thing, write it down)

Three Ways to Monitor Your Blood Sugar

There are three main ways to monitor your blood sugar. These include:

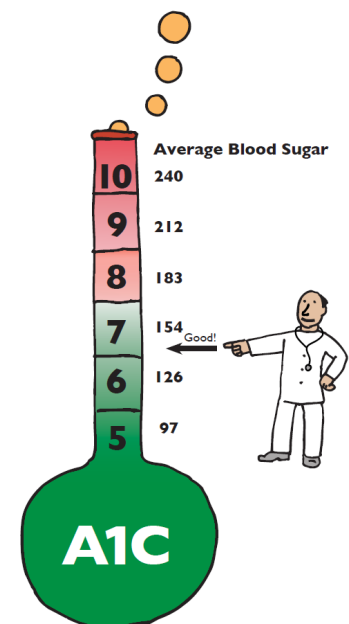
1. A hemoglobin A1C test at your doctor's office that measures your average blood sugar over the previous 3 months (*this test does not require you to be fasting*).
2. Use of a continuous glucose monitor to check your blood sugar.
3. The finger-prick method to instantly check your blood sugar.

1. A Hemoglobin A1C Test

Your A1C is your average blood sugar level over the past 3 months. If your A1C is 7% or below, then your diabetes is under good control; however, some health care providers urge patients to lower their A1C level to 6.5% or below. If your number is above 7%, then you and your doctor will decide how to get your diabetes under better control.

What Is My Current A1C? My Goal A1C?

- 7% or less for most people
- 8% or less for people who are at risk for low blood glucose or who have serious complications
- My Current A1C: _____
- My Goal A1C: _____



See handout: *What's My A1C?*

2. A Continuous Glucose Monitor

You can wear a monitor that continuously monitors your blood sugar. Check with your doctor if a continuous glucose monitor is good choice for you, and if your insurance plan covers it.

3. Finger-Prick Method (using your glucometer)

This is a great way to instantly check your blood sugar level before/after meals or when you feel sick. If you know your blood sugar is too high or too low, you can take the right steps to get it back to normal. Writing down your numbers (with notes) is very helpful to your doctor so that he/she can see what your day-to-day blood sugars are like and partner with you to make the best decisions about how to treat your diabetes.

Note: Medicare covers testing supplies

- 1 testing strip/day if not on insulin
- 3 testing strips/day if on insulin

Your health care provider can write “reasons of medical necessity” for testing more often (e.g., prevent complications, adjust medication, test before exercise, driving).

WHAT'S MY A1C?

The A1C is a blood test you get at the doctor's office or health clinic. It shows:

- Your average blood sugar level for the last 3 months
- Your risk (chance) of having other health problems because of diabetes

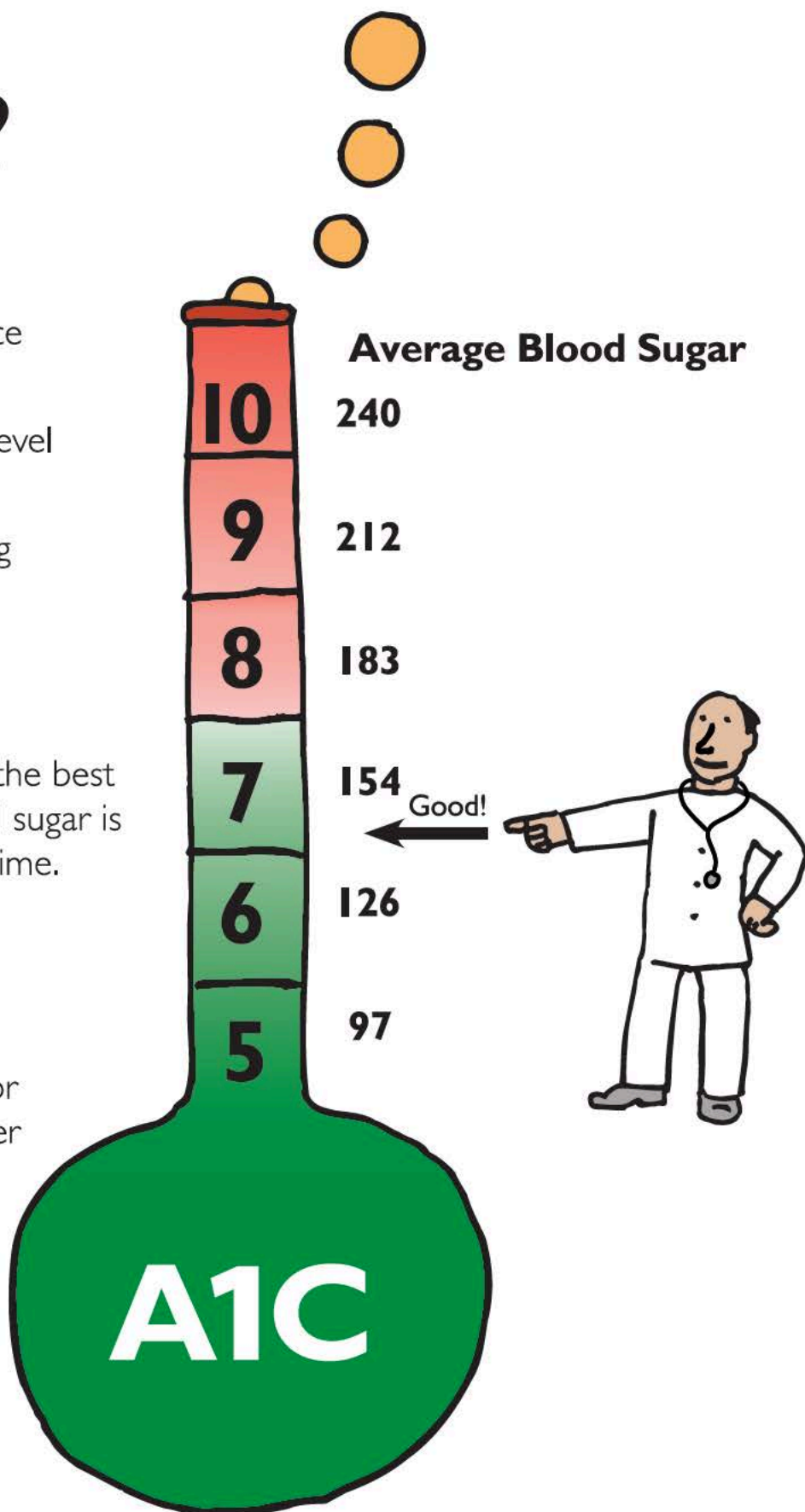
Why do I need it?

Your A1C test results are the best way to know if your blood sugar is under good control over time.

What is a good A1C number?

7 or lower. You and your doctor or diabetes educator will decide the A1C number (goal) that is best for you.

**Be your BEST,
Get the TEST!**



It Is Best To Have Your Own Glucometer

To maintain your safety and successfully manage your diabetes, it is best to have your own glucometer for two reasons:

1. Meters and lancet devices can become contaminated with blood.
2. When your doctor or diabetes educator reviews your meter, it avoids confusion that might lead to medication errors if someone else's values are on your meter.



Let's Practice Checking Your Blood Sugar

1. Wash hands (or use alcohol pad) and dry thoroughly.
2. Insert lancet into lancet device and twist off cap.
(note: you do not have to use the lancet device that comes with your meter if you prefer another device)
3. Turn lancet dial to adjust depth of finger prick for comfort.
4. Pull lancet device spring back until it catches.
5. Massage finger pad to prepare for prick.
6. Insert test strip to turn on meter.
7. Hold lancet device against pad of finger and press lancet button to prick finger.
(note: massage finger pad again, if needed, to get a big enough blood drop for test strip)
8. Touch tip of test strip to blood drop.
9. Your test result is displayed.
10. Remove test strip and meter turns off.
11. Record blood glucose reading and add helpful comments. If the reading was too high or too low, make comments as to why.

Lancet and Sharps Disposal

- Place needles or insulin syringes in a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on cap or tightly secured lid, such as a laundry detergent bottle.
- Reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape.
- Label the container "Not for Recycling."
- Once container is secure, dispose of it with your regular trash.

Helpful
Tips

Self Checks of Blood Sugar

How to use this card.

Each section of the card on the left below tells you when to check your blood sugar and the blood sugar goals at that time. The box on the right below shows you that the goals set by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists are a bit more stringent than the goals set by the American Diabetes Association.

Each time you check your blood sugar, write down the date, time, and results. Take this card with you on your health care visits, show it to your health care team, and talk about your goals and how you are doing.



Self Checks of Blood Sugar	Date	Time	Result
My blood sugar before meals: Usual goal 80 to 130 My goal: _____			
My blood sugar 2 hours after meals: Usual goal below 180 My goal: _____			
My blood sugar at bedtime: Usual goal 110 to 150 My goal: _____			

Blood Sugar Goals (mg/dL)		
Time of Check	AACE*	ADA**
Before Meals	<110	80-130
2 Hours After Meals	<140	<180
Bedtime	<140	<150
A1C	<6.5%	<7%

*American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)
 ** American Diabetes Association (ADA)

Notes:

Use the notes section on the back to add helpful comments explaining your readings (e.g., readings outside the normal range, physical activity) for your healthcare visits.

See *handout: Blood Sugar Diary* (another option for tracking your blood sugar)



BLOOD SUGAR DIARY

Name: _____

Week of: _____

My Blood Sugar Goals: Waking Up: _____ Before Meals: _____ 2 Hours After Meals: _____ Bedtime: _____

Day / Date	Medication	Breakfast		Medication	Lunch		Medication	Dinner		Medication	Bedtime
		Before	2 hr After		Before	2 hr After		Before	2 hr After		
MON 2 / 10	Metformin 1,000 mg	101 8am	160 10:10am		130 12:30	198 2:20pm	Metformin 1,000 mg	122 6pm	176 8pm	Lantus 20 units	135 10pm
Comments:*	Walked 30 minutes today - faster than last week. Ate a big plate of pasta for lunch.										
MON /											
Comments:											
TUE /											
Comments:											
WED /											
Comments:											
THU /											
Comments:											
FRI /											
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SAT /											
Comments:											
SUN /											
Comments:											

*Bring the diary page to your next diabetes-care appointment.



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Responding to Abnormal Results

Sometimes you will get results that confuse or even scare you. It’s helpful to know when you need to seek help immediately, and when you can wait until your next visit with your doctor. The first consideration is for your own safety.

What If I Have A Very High Reading?

Hyperglycemia is the medical word for blood sugar that is **too high**.

Common signs and symptoms of **hyperglycemia** include:

1. Very thirsty all of the time
2. Need to urinate often
3. Feeling weak or tired
4. Difficulty concentrating, headaches
5. Blurry vision
6. Dry skin
7. Weight loss
8. Frequent infections or poor wound healing

What Should I Do?

- Check your blood sugar often
- Continue taking your medicine as directed by your doctor
- Drink lots of water or other unsweetened beverages
- Eat a healthy diet and limit added sugar, fruits, and starches like bread, potatoes, and pasta
- Exercise (take a walk)
- Call your doctor if blood sugars stay high and you don’t know what to do or if you are feeling sick or are vomiting

Even if you feel generally well, if you have several readings that are uncharacteristically high for you, you should call your doctor’s office to report them.

Go to the Emergency Department if you are vomiting, have abdominal pain, or feel poorly with high readings (usually > 300), unless you are able to see your doctor immediately.

TAKE YOUR MEDICATION SHEET WITH YOU!

See handout: High Blood Sugar



Medication Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please list the **DIABETES** medication(s) you are currently taking.

Drug Name	Dosage	Frequency	How Long



HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)

Keeping your blood sugar under control is important. Too much sugar in your blood, for too long, can cause serious health problems.

Common Causes: Too much food, not taking enough insulin or diabetes pills, being less active than normal, stress or illness.

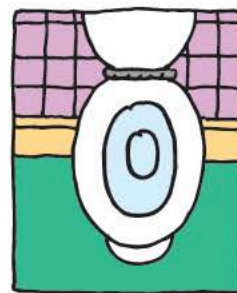
Symptoms include:



Thirsty all the time



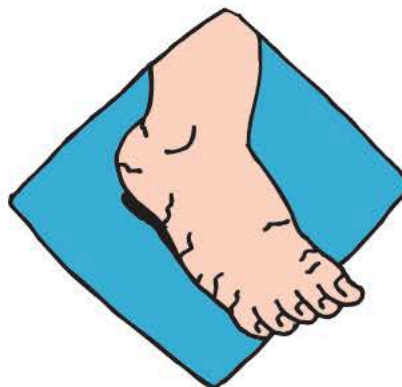
Blurry vision



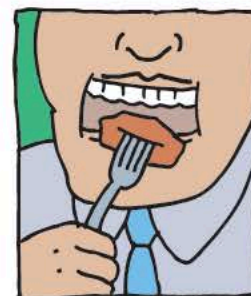
Need to urinate often



Weak or tired



Dry skin



Often hungry

What to do:



- Check your blood sugar often
- Continue to take your medicine
- Follow your meal plan
- Drink lots of water
- Exercise – if you can.

If your blood sugar is higher than your goal for 3 days and you don't know why, call your doctor or health clinic right away.



What If I Have A Very Low Reading?

Hypoglycemia is the medical word for blood sugar that is **too low**. Low blood sugar can happen quickly and be very dangerous.

Common signs and symptoms of **hypoglycemia** include:

1. Sweating
2. Weakness
3. Nervousness, trembling
4. Intense hunger
5. Fast heart rate
6. Having trouble talking

What Should I Do?

- Check blood sugar right away – if it is **below 70, then treat for low blood sugar**
- **Low blood sugar treatments:**
 - a) drink 4 oz juice or 6 oz of regular soda **OR**
 - b) eat 2-3 sugar tablets or 2 pieces of hard candy **OR**
 - c) eat 3 packets or 1 tablespoon of regular sugar
- After treatment, check blood sugar again in 15 minutes – treat again if blood sugar is still too low

If you have a **very low glucose (either less than 45 or any level so low that you needed another person to assist you in getting treatment)**, you should call your physician before taking your next dose of diabetes medication, especially if the reading has no simple explanation – such as taking your medication and then forgetting to eat.

Do not stop your medication without talking to your doctor. If you have had more than one low reading on a weekly basis, or feel that you have to eat more than you want to in order to maintain normal blood glucose, call and report this to your diabetes care team. The doctor may wish to adjust your medication prior to your next office visit.

**Emergency Medical ID
Type 2 Diabetes**



Name _____

Medical Conditions _____

Birthdate _____

**In case of emergency, always keep
your Diabetes Medical ID Card in your
wallet/backpack/purse.**

**If I faint, fall ill, or am nearly unconscious
please call 911 immediately.**

See handout: Low Blood Sugar

LOW BLOOD SUGAR

(Hypoglycemia)

A low blood sugar can happen quickly. If not treated right away, low blood sugar can cause a medical emergency. You can even pass out.

Common causes: Skip a meal or not eat enough food; too much insulin or diabetes pills; more active than usual.

Warning signs include:



Shaky or dizzy



Blurry vision



Weak or tired



Sweaty



Headache



Hungry



Upset or nervous

What to do?



Check your blood sugar right away. If it is below 70, treat for low blood sugar. If you can't check, treat anyway to be safe.



Treat by eating 3 packets or 1 tablespoon of regular sugar, 4 ounces of regular fruit juice, or 6 ounces of regular (not diet!) soda.

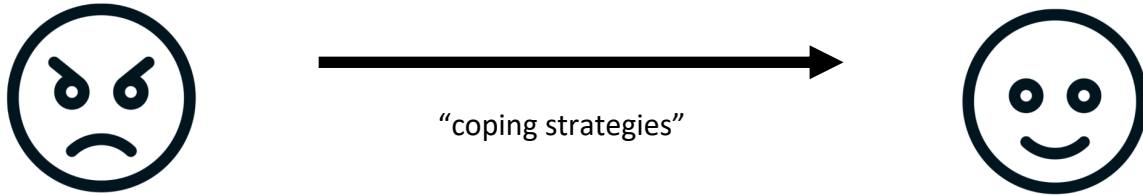


Check your blood sugar in 15 minutes. If it is still low (below 70), treat again. If you keep having problems and you don't know why, call your doctor or health clinic.



GROUP DISCUSSION

Coping Strategies – Thoughts and behaviors (calm down strategies) that help you feel better.



What coping strategies do you typically use to help yourself feel better?

(think of at least 1 thing, write it down)

Key Questions to Ask Yourself Regarding Your Coping Strategies:

1. Is the coping strategy helpful?
2. What would I tell a friend?

Sticky Note Activity – Helpful Coping Strategies That Work When I’m:

Mad (**Red**)

Sad (**Blue**)

Anxious/Nervous (**Yellow**)

Coping Strategies that I Want to Try (**Green**)

Self Checks of Blood Sugar – Resilience Activity

Now that we practiced checking our blood sugar, let’s use our coping strategies to address the challenges/setbacks we talked about at the beginning of class.

Example:



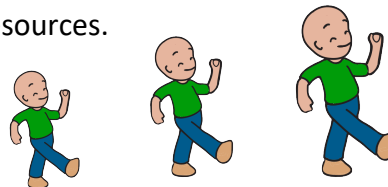
In the example, how was the person feeling before and after checking their blood sugar?

What coping strategies can help you address challenges to checking your blood sugar?

(think of at least 1 thing, write it down)

Things to Commit to Doing Until We Meet Again

1. For one meal, check your blood sugar before and two hours after the meal. If possible, take a picture of the meal with your phone to share with the group. Record the values. What did you learn?
2. Practice using and growing your resilience resources.



Bring to Our Next Class Session

- Your diabetes folder
- Your glucometer