



SELF-MONITORING OF BLOOD GLUCOSE

WHAT IS SELF-MONITORING OF BLOOD GLUCOSE?

Self-monitoring of blood glucose is monitoring your own glucose (blood sugar) at home or at work. This usually involves obtaining a small drop of blood from your finger or arm and the use of a glucose meter.

WHY SHOULD I MEASURE MY BLOOD SUGAR AT HOME?

The only way for you to know how well controlled your blood sugar is from one day to the next is to measure it yourself. Checking your blood sugar levels will help you to know:

- if you are taking the right amount of diabetes medicine at the right time.
- the effect of your meal plan on your blood glucose levels.
- how your exercise/activity levels are affecting your blood glucose levels.

Having your blood sugar measured only when you see the doctor is not likely to give you enough information if you are serious about controlling your blood sugar.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THE RESULTS?

You should keep a record of your results, along with the time of the test, in the diary that comes with the meter. If you prefer, you can use your date book, a notebook or the recording sheet we use here in the hospital. Whenever you see your doctor, diabetes educator or dietician, be sure to have these records with you and discuss the test results with them.

WHAT DO I DO IF I NOTICE MY BLOOD SUGAR IS TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW BETWEEN VISITS?

If you notice your blood sugar is too high or too low, contact your doctor or diabetes educator. They can discuss with you the various reasons why this may have happened and suggest changes that may help you eliminate highs and lows. Don't forget to treat the low blood sugar too!

WHERE DO I GET A METER?

You can purchase a meter in any pharmacy or medical supply store. It is advisable to check with your doctor or diabetes educator to find out which meters



they recommend. Get a prescription for the meter from your doctor. It may be covered by your insurance plan.

There are also companies that will take your order over the telephone and deliver the meter to you the next day. Often these companies will bill the cost of the meter to your insurance company after checking to see if you have coverage for this item. The balance is billed to you at home or may be paid by your secondary insurance.

HOW DO I LEARN HOW TO USE THE METER?

Your diabetes educator will most often be the one to teach you how to properly use the meter. On occasion, a pharmacist may explain its use. Some people are able to follow the directions in the manual or on the video. It is best though, to be seen by a diabetes educator for teaching. In addition, even if you learn quickly, you should return for a follow-up visit to be sure you are doing the testing correctly and know how to solve any problems that may develop.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TEST?

Testing schedules vary from person to person. Discuss this with your diabetes educator or your doctor. It is usually recommended that you test 2-4 times a day, plus at any time you don't feel well and think it may be related to your blood sugar. To see how your eating and activity levels affect your blood glucose levels, you may check 1-2 hours after meals or large snacks and before and after exercise. If you are pregnant, you could be testing as many as 7 times a day. Many factors will be considered when deciding on a testing pattern, including time, your motivation, cost, ease of testing and whether or not you are on insulin. If you want to learn how to test your blood sugar, discuss your results, or fine tune your control, speak with your diabetes educator or doctor.

Most people test their blood sugar by obtaining a small blood sample from their fingertips. Some people prefer to test blood sugar on different areas (alternate sites) of the body other than fingertips. Alternate sites include upper arm, thigh, calf and fleshy parts of the hand. Some glucose meters will allow you to test these alternate sites. There are times, though, when blood glucose test results from alternate sites may differ from fingertip blood results and fingertip testing is recommended. It is recommended that alternate site testing should be avoided when checking for low blood sugar reactions and *post prandial blood glucose* (blood taken 1-2 hours after eating to see the amount of glucose in the blood).