

Taking Charge



Checking your blood sugar

Checking your blood sugar is an important part of managing your diabetes. It helps you and your health care provider know how well your treatment plan is working. At-home testing is done with a blood sugar monitor. Results are noted in milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL).

Testing shows your blood sugar at the time you check, such as before or after a meal. For most people, the before-meal goal is between 80 and 130 mg/dL. Most people will aim for a goal of less than 180 mg/dL 1 to 2 hours after a meal.

High blood sugar

Having diabetes means that your blood sugar is higher than normal. But sometimes your blood sugar may spike much higher than normal. This is known as *hyperglycemia*. Very high blood sugar may cause symptoms. These symptoms may include urinating often or feeling thirsty.

The best way to know if your blood sugar is too high is to check it often. Talk with your health care provider about how to keep your blood sugar within your target range.

Low blood sugar

Low blood sugar is known as *hypoglycemia*. Low blood sugar is a level lower than 70 mg/dL. You may have low blood sugar if you feel shaky, dizzy, sweaty, moody, confused, or hungry or if you have a headache.

If you think your blood sugar is too low, check it right away. Then follow the **rule of 15**:

1. Eat or drink food that contains **15 grams of carbohydrates**.
2. Check your blood sugar again 15 minutes later.
3. If it is still low, repeat steps 1 and 2. Then if your blood sugar is still too low, call your health care provider.
4. Once you are back within your target range, eat a snack within an hour.

A tip for low blood sugar:

Make a list of foods that contain 15 grams of carbohydrates. Choose a food from the list on the right to eat when your blood sugar is low. Some examples:



2 tablespoons
of raisins



1 slice
of bread



1 small piece
of fresh fruit (4 oz)

See other side



Managing the highs and lows

You work hard each day to manage your blood sugar. But there may be days when your blood sugar is higher or lower than your goal. If you notice that this happens often, talk with your health care provider. This may be a sign that changes need to be made to your treatment plan.

Blood sugar that is too high or too low can also happen if you:

- Take too much of your diabetes medicine or miss a dose
- Eat foods with too many carbohydrates or too much sugar
- Skip a meal
- Are more active than usual
- Drink alcohol
- Are sick or under a lot of stress

To better manage your blood sugar, take your medicine as prescribed. Talk with your health care provider about all the medicines you take, including vitamins, herbal supplements, and over-the-counter drugs. It can also help if you manage the foods you eat and drink, the amount of activity you do, and your stress.



Blood sugar pointers

In the chart below, place a check mark next to the steps you want to take to manage your blood sugar. Then check the ways you will take these steps, or write in your own.

Steps I can take to manage my blood sugar	How I will do it
<input type="checkbox"/> Check and record my blood sugar in my logbook the way my health care provider and I discussed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep my logbook at the kitchen table to remind myself to test my blood sugar at mealtimes. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Talk with my health care provider about my blood sugar results.	<input type="checkbox"/> Take my logbook to all visits with my health care provider. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep my health care provider up-to-date on all the medicines I am taking.	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep a list in my logbook of all the medicines, supplements, vitamins, minerals, and herbs I am taking. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for blood sugar that may be too high or too low.	<input type="checkbox"/> Store some glucose tablets in my car in case of hypoglycemia. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____