

# Managing Diabetes



## *Four ways to manage diabetes*

The American Diabetes Association says that the best way to lower your risk of diabetes complications is to keep your blood sugar in control. There are ways to help you do this:

- Monitoring
- Medications
- Meals
- Movement

In this newsletter, we will focus on monitoring your blood glucose (BG) and medications.

## *Monitoring BG*

The main ways to monitor BG are spot checks through finger stick testing or continuous glucose monitoring, and a lab test that gives a three month average – the A1C.

### BG testing

How often to test depends on the type of medication you are taking and how well controlled your diabetes is. People on insulin monitor several times a day or continuously. Others may monitor multiple times a day, daily or even less often. Ask your doctor how often you should test. Target range – ask your doctor what BG range he or she recommends for you.

### A1C testing

This is an average BG for two to three months and should be monitored every three to six months as recommended by your doctor. Your A1C result often shows your risk of future diabetes complications and should be kept within the target range your doctor recommends.

If your BG is not in the target range, look at the common causes below to help you identify and treat the cause appropriately.

## *High BG (Hyperglycemia)*

### Causes

- Not taking your medication
- Taking certain medications
- Being injured or having surgery
- Eating too much food
- Sudden or ongoing stress
- Not enough or decreased exercise
- Sleep apnea or insomnia
- Having an illness or infection

### Symptoms

- Increased urination
- Blurred vision
- Increased thirst
- Fatigue
- Increased hunger
- Headache

### Treatment

- If you experience any symptoms, check your blood sugar right away.
- Drink water or sugar-free liquids.
- If you take insulin, you may need to take an extra dose. Refer to your Diabetes Action Plan or talk with your doctor.
- Test your blood sugar every four hours. Call your doctor if your blood sugar is not going down after two checks or if it starts to increase.



The main ways to monitor BG are through finger stick testing (BG testing) and lab work – the A1C.

If your blood sugar is less than 250 and you are well, mild exercise such as walking can lower your blood sugar.

## Low BG (Hypoglycemia)

### Causes

- Too little food or missed meals
- Too much or increased exercise
- Too much medication
- Drinking alcohol without eating

### Symptoms

- Sweating or cold, clammy skin
- Hard, fast heartbeat or headache
- Shakiness, dizziness
- Confusion or irritability

### Treatment

- If you experience any symptoms, check your blood sugar right away.
- Eat or drink 15 grams of fast-acting sugar, such as: 4 oz (1/2 cup) of fruit juice or regular soda, glucose tablets or glucose gel (see instructions), 1 tablespoon of sugar, honey, or corn syrup or hard candies, jellybeans or gumdrops (see food label for how many to consume).
- Check blood sugar after 15 minutes to see if the fast-acting sugar worked.
- If blood sugar is still low, repeat 15 grams of fast-acting sugar.
- Once your blood sugar rises to a normal level, eat a snack or meal to make sure it doesn't lower again.

- Call 911 or have someone take you to the emergency room if your blood sugar does not respond to treatment with fast-acting sugar.

### Medication

The goal of medication therapy is to simulate what your body would be doing if you did not have diabetes. Taking medications can help regulate BG and lower the A1C. Medications for diabetes come in a variety of categories and may perform the following functions:

- Decrease the amount of sugar released from your liver.
- Stimulate the pancreas to increase insulin production.
- Slow down digestion so you eat less and can control the sugar from your food more effectively.
- Lower insulin resistance so your body uses insulin better.
- Provide insulin if your pancreas is not making enough.

Always read the label and instructions that come with your medication, as some medication is best taken with food.

In addition, ask your doctor or pharmacist when and how to take your medication.

Taking your medication on a regular basis is an important part of getting better control of your BG and to avoid complications that result from high BG.



Medications for diabetes come in a variety of categories.

Source: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes>