

Diabetes Newsletter

February 2020

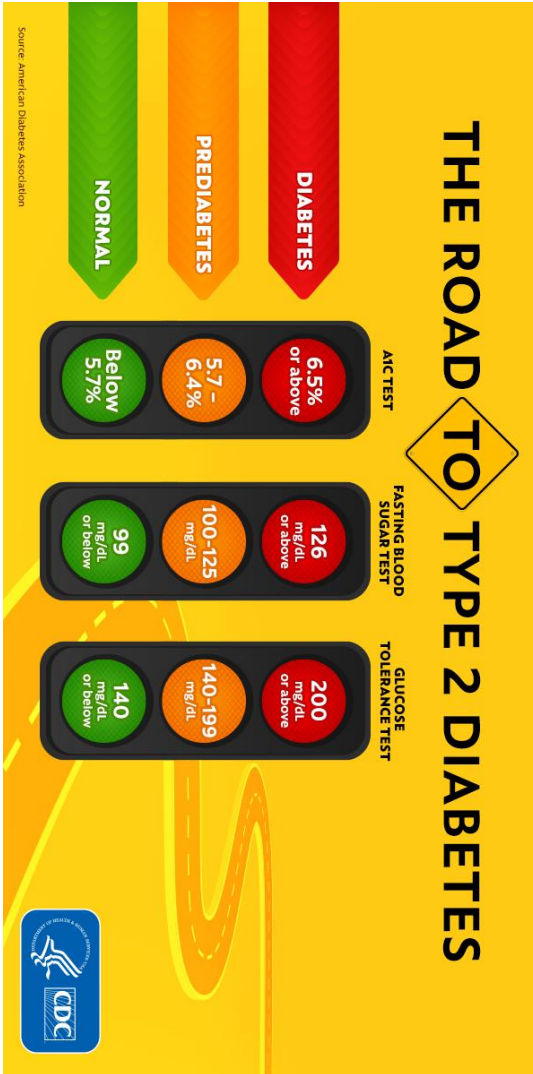
Blood Sugar, A1C and Implications / Risks

- **What Happens When Sugar Enters the Body?**
- **What Does the A1C Test Measure?**
- **How Do I Measure My Blood Sugar Levels?**
- **What Causes Blood Sugar to be High or Low?**

ATC Members:
Diabetic Test Strips now have no copay requirement if you have a prescription from your doctor.

Our goal always is to help our members stay as healthy as possible for a happy and productive life! To help achieve healthy living, this newsletter for members focuses on diabetes education, prevention and management.

Please let us know how you like it and what topics you might want covered in the future.
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What has your blood sugar been up to lately?

Get an A1C test to find out your average levels—important to know if you're at risk for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, or if you're managing diabetes.

Diabetes is a condition in which blood sugar levels are too high.

What Happens When Sugar Enters the Body?

- Your pancreas releases insulin when your blood sugar goes up after eating.
- Insulin acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy.
- When blood sugar and insulin are high in the blood, the liver absorbs blood sugar and stores it as glycogen. The liver can turn it back into blood sugar later when it's needed for energy.

What Does the A1C Test Measure?

The A1C test—also known as the hemoglobin A1C or HbA1c test—is a simple blood test that measures your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months. It's one of the commonly used tests to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes and is also the main test to help you and your health care team manage your diabetes. Higher A1C levels are linked to diabetes complications, so reaching and maintaining your individual A1C goal is really important if you have diabetes.

When sugar enters your bloodstream, it attaches to hemoglobin, a protein in your red blood cells. Everybody has some sugar attached to their hemoglobin, but people with higher blood sugar levels have more. The A1C test measures the percentage of your red blood cells that have sugar-coated hemoglobin.

How Do I Measure My Blood Sugar Levels?

If you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, there are two ways to measure blood sugar:

- **Blood sugar checks** that you do yourself. These numbers tell you what your blood sugar level is at the time you test. Blood sugar monitoring is very important for people with diabetes.
- **The A1C test** is done in a lab or at your doctor's office. The A1C test is a measure of the average blood sugar level over the past 3 months. It also helps your health care team decide the type and amount of diabetes medicine you may need.

Managing your diabetes can help keep you from having other serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage, poor oral health, and vision loss.

What Causes Blood Sugar To Be High or Low?

Checking your blood sugar levels regularly helps track what makes your numbers go up and down. For example, being sick, stress, or eating certain foods may cause your numbers to go up. Or when you take your medicine, get more active, or eat less than usual, your numbers may go down.

High blood sugar, also known as hyperglycemia, means your blood sugar level is higher than your target level. If this continues over time, it can lead to long-term, serious health problems. Some symptoms of high blood sugar include the following:

- Feeling very tired
- Feeling thirsty
- Having blurry vision
- Needing to urinate (pee) more often

If you are sick and your blood sugar stays over 240 mg/dl after 2 checks, call your doctor. If you have type 1 diabetes, be sure to check your urine for **ketones**. If you get sick and have diabetes, follow these additional steps even if your blood sugar is within your target level:

- **Continue taking your diabetes pills or insulin as usual.**
- Test your blood glucose every four hours and keep track of the results.
- Drink extra (calorie-free) liquids and try to eat as you normally would.
- Weigh yourself every day. Losing weight without trying is a sign of high blood glucose.
- Check your temperature every morning and evening. **A fever may be a sign of infection. Call your doctor.**