

Healthy Living: Checking Blood Glucose¹

Jennifer Hillan²

Checking your blood glucose levels is an important part of managing diabetes. Knowing your levels tells you how well your care plan is working and if any changes should be made. Read on to learn more!



Who Should Check

Anyone with diabetes can benefit from checking blood glucose, especially if you:

- ✓ Take insulin or pills for diabetes.
- ✓ Have a hard time controlling blood glucose.
- ✓ Have severe low blood glucose levels or ketones from high blood glucose levels.
- ✓ Have low blood glucose without the usual warning signs.

When to Check

Your health care provider will tell you when to check your blood glucose. Here is a general guideline:

- ✓ Before eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner (or a really big snack).
- ✓ 1 to 2 hours after eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner (or a really big snack).
- ✓ Before going to bed for the night.
- ✓ At 2 or 3 am (if you happen to be awake).

How to Check

To check your blood glucose, you stick your finger with a special needle, called a lancet. This will give you a drop of blood to put on a test strip. The test strip goes into a blood glucose meter, which is a small machine that “reads” your blood glucose.



1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Stick your fingertip with a lancet (use the side of your finger near your fingernail).
3. Squeeze your finger until you get a drop of blood. Put the blood on the test strip. (If you have trouble getting blood, wash your finger with warm water, hold your hand down, or squeeze your finger.)
4. Put the strip into the meter and follow the meter’s instructions.

Some meters let you test other areas such as your upper arm, forearm, base of thumb, or thigh. But it’s best to use your fingertip when you suspect low blood sugar.

1. La versión en español de este documento es Vida Saludable: Examinado su Glucosa en la Sangre (FCS8811-Span). This document is FCS8811, one in a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. First published: October 2006. Please visit the EDIS Website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Jennifer Hillan, MSH, RD, LD/N, ENAFS nutrition educator, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Larry R. Arrington, Dean

Keeping Track

Keep a log of your blood glucose levels. This will help you see how food, activity, and stress can affect your levels. If they are often too high or too low, your health care provider may need to change your diabetes plan. Bring your log with you when you see your health care provider. Use this example, or ask your diabetes health care team for a log.

Date & Time	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		Bedtime	2 or 3 am (If awake)	Notes
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After			

Your Plan

Ask your health care provider for your target blood glucose levels and when to call the diabetes care team.

Before meals: _____ 2 hours after meals: _____

Other times and goals: _____

When to call your diabetes care team:

Important telephone numbers:
