



# Diabetes Education



*“I’ll get around to getting my tests done later”*



*“Is it really that important to get these tests done?”*



*“My doctor will tell me if there’s a problem”*

## Tests and Exams:

Make sure to CALL your doctor or schedule a VISIT to discuss your results.

**DO NOT** assume that no news is good news.

## Tests and Exams

### Your Test and Exam Checklist:

Life is busy. Managing a chronic disease like diabetes makes life even busier. Think of getting your tests and exams like getting the oil changed in your car; it will prevent problems to the organs in your body and will keep you healthy for a long time.

Once you’ve gone through the effort of getting the tests done, make sure to call your doctor or schedule a visit to discuss your results. Do not assume that no news is good news. Your doctor has many patients to discuss results with, and you have only yourself. Besides you are the most important part of your diabetes health care team. Being a member of this team means knowing your numbers and what they mean.

These are the **TESTS and EXAMS** your doctor will check on a regular basis; how often depends on the test itself:



- ✓ Hemoglobin A1c (*HbA1c*)
- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Cholesterol and blood lipids
- ✓ Weight and waist circumference
- ✓ Urine protein (*also called microalbumin*)
- ✓ Dilated eye exam
- ✓ Foot exam

### Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

*(Reach Your GOALS)*

**A** ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- **A1c:** Below 7%

**B** ✓ EVERY VISIT

- **Blood Pressure:**  
Below 130/80mmHg

**C** ✓ ONCE A YEAR

- **Cholesterol:**  
LDL: Below 100mg/dL  
HDL: Above 40mg/dL for Men & Above 50mg/dL for Women

**⊙ Blood Glucose Targets:**

- Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
- 2 Hours after eating, Less Than 180mg/dL

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## Types of Blood Lipids:

- **LDL Cholesterol** is sometimes called bad cholesterol because at high levels it can narrow or block your blood vessels. If untreated this increase will lead to coronary artery disease.
- ⊙ Target LDL-cholesterol = below 100 mg/dL
- **HDL Cholesterol** is known as the good cholesterol because of its role in removing fatty deposits from the insides of your blood vessels. This keeps them from getting blocked. The higher this number the more it protects you from heart disease.
- ⊙ Target HDL cholesterol = above 40 mg/dL for men, above 50 mg/dL for women
- **Triglycerides** are another kind of lipid. High triglyceride levels increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- ⊙ Target triglyceride = below 150 mg/dL

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# Tests and Exams

## What Do the ABC's of Diabetes Mean?

The hemoglobin A1c, blood pressure and cholesterol are the basic tests that help your health care provider know if any changes will be made to your diabetes care plan. If the results are on target, then your care plan will remain the same.

# A

**Hemoglobin A1c:** is a blood test that tells you your average blood glucose (or sugar) for the past 3 months. More specifically glucose is in every red blood cell. Each red blood cell has an average life span of about 3 months. So this number tells you what your daily blood sugar has been for the last 3 months.

- ✓ Good reasons to decrease your HbA1c:
  - Decreases risk of diabetes complications
  - Reduces heart disease risk by 42%
  - 97% of the reduction in heart disease is from lowering HbA1c
  - Reduces risk of death from heart attack or stroke by 57%
  - Reduces diabetic eye disease (retinopathy) by 38%
  - Reduces kidney disease (nephropathy) by 30%
  - Reduces nerve disease (neuropathy) by 30 to 40%
- ✓ Goal hemoglobin A1c = below 7%
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Every 3 Months**

# B

**Blood Pressure:** number represents the force of blood inside your blood vessels. When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder than it should. You want your blood pressure 130/80 mmHg or less. You will hear it said as "130 over 80".

- ✓ Good reasons to keep your blood pressure at the target level:
  - Decrease heart disease risk by 33 to 50%
  - Decrease risk of damaging small vessels to the eyes by 33%
  - Risk of developing kidney disease decreased by 30 to 70%
- ✓ Target blood pressure = below 130/80
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Every Doctor's Visit**

# C

**Cholesterol (also called blood lipids):** value tells you the amount of fat in your blood. Our bodies normally make small amounts of the different types of cholesterol. The problem happens when the levels of the cholesterol rise. If untreated, this narrows or blocks the blood vessels leading to the heart that leads to coronary (heart) artery disease.

- ✓ Good reason to improve your cholesterol level:
  - Reduce risk of heart disease complications by 20 to 50%
  - Target triglyceride = below 150 mg/dl
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Once a Year for ALL Blood Lipids**



# Diabetes Education

## Tests and Exams

### Don't Forget!

Make sure to CALL your doctor or schedule a VISIT to discuss your results.

**DO NOT** assume that no news is good news.

### Other Tests and Exams:

**Weight and Body Mass Index:** A member of your diabetes health care team will discuss with you your target weight for your height and age. Several major studies have shown that even a small amount of weight loss decreases diabetes complications and reduces risk of developing heart disease. Also, they might discuss something called a **BMI** or **body mass index**. This is an estimate of body fat. A measure of waist size, waist circumference and your weight status can predict your risk of developing coronary artery disease. People whose body shape resembles an apple (larger waist than hips) are at higher risk for heart disease than those whose body is shaped like a pear (smaller waist than hips). Someone from your diabetes care team will measure your waist circumference and determine if weight loss is necessary.

- ✓ Good reasons to lose weight:
  - 58% risk reduction of diabetes progressing
  - At least 30% reduction in diabetes complications
- ✓ Lose between 5 to 10% of current weight
- ✓ Target BMI = less than 25.
- ✓ Target waist circumference = less than 40 inches for men, less than 35 inches for women



**Urine Protein (or Microalbumin):** When your doctor orders a urine test, she is most likely checking your urine for protein also called microalbumin. This test is used to check how your kidneys are working. The kidneys' main function is to filter waste out from our blood into our urine much in the same way that a water filter works in your faucet. Just like the other blood vessels going to the heart, high blood sugars and high blood pressure can damage vessels that go to the kidneys. As a result protein appears in the urine that is not normally there. This complication of diabetes can be prevented by keeping your blood sugars in check and keeping your blood pressure on target.

- ✓ Blood pressure control reduces kidney disease risk by 30 to 70%
- ✓ Keeping HbA1c in target range reduces kidney disease risk by 30 to 57%
- ✓ Target microalbumin = below 30 mg/24 hours
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Once a Year**

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## Remember:

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for Men & Above  
50mg/dL for Women

**Ⓞ Blood Glucose Targets:**

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- 2 Hours after eating,  
Less Than 180mg/dL

# Tests and Exams

## Other Tests and Exams (cont.):

**Dilated Eye Exam:** This exam is performed to check the health of the small blood vessels in your eyes. Just like the other blood vessels going to the heart and kidneys, high blood sugars and high blood pressure can damage vessels that go to the eyes. As a result these small blood vessels leak and protein can spill into the lens of the eyes. The eye doctor is checking for eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and cataracts. This complication of diabetes can be prevented by keeping your blood sugars in check and keeping your blood pressure on target.

- ✓ Getting regular eye checks reduces vision lost by 50 to 60%
- ✓ Blood pressure control reduces eye disease risk by 33%
- ✓ Keeping HbA1c in target range reduces eye disease risk by 38%
- ✓ Target is normal eye exam or reduced vision loss
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Once a Year**

**Foot Exam:** Performing daily foot checks is important because the effects of high blood sugars and high blood pressure affect the nerves of the arms and especially the legs and feet. Having your doctor check your feet allows him to check for ulcers, calluses and nerve damage and to treat them before they develop into severe infections of the foot.

- ✓ Participating in regular foot care reduces amputations by 45 to 85%
- ✓ Controlling HbA1c reduces nerve disease by 30 to 40%
- ✓ Keeping blood pressure in check reduces nerve damage by 33%
- ✓ Target is daily foot care and normal feet exam at every doctor's visit
- ✓ **Testing frequency = Every Doctor's Visit**



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