

Factors Affecting Blood Glucose

Before you had diabetes, no matter what you ate or how active you were, your blood glucose levels stayed within a normal range. But with diabetes, your blood glucose level can rise higher and some diabetes medications can make them go lower than normal. Many factors can change your blood glucose levels. Learning about these can help control your blood glucose levels.

You can use your blood glucose (sugar) levels to make decisions about food and activity. These decisions can help you delay or prevent diabetes complications such as heart attack, kidney disease, blindness, and amputation.

WHAT CAN MAKE MY BLOOD GLUCOSE RISE?

- Too much food (e.g. a meal or snack with more carbohydrates than usual)
- Not being active
- Not enough insulin or oral diabetes medications
- Side effects from other medications (for example, steroids, anti-psychotic meds)
- Illness (your body releases hormones to fight the illness, and those hormones raise blood glucose levels)
- Stress (stress can produce hormones that raise blood glucose levels)
- Short- or long-term pain (injury, such as sunburn) (your body releases hormones that raise glucose levels)
- Menstrual periods (which causes changes in hormone levels)
- Dehydration

WHAT CAN MAKE MY BLOOD GLUCOSE FALL?

- Not enough food (e.g. a meal or snack with fewer carbohydrates than usual, missing a meal or snack)
- Alcohol (especially on an empty stomach)
- Too much insulin or oral diabetes medications
- Side effects from other medications
- More physical activity or exercise than usual - physical activity makes your body more sensitive to insulin and can lower blood glucose.

HOW CAN I TRACK MY BLOOD GLUCOSE?

There are two ways to keep track of your blood glucose levels:

- using a blood glucose meter to measure your blood glucose level at that moment
- getting an A1C at least twice a year to find out your average blood glucose for the past 2 to 3 months