

Lessening the Pain from Fingertip Testing

Regularly monitoring your blood glucose (sugar) levels helps you judge how your body is responding to food, activity and medications.

Self-monitoring with a blood glucose (sugar) meter requires a tiny drop of blood, usually taken from your fingertip using a lancet with a spring-loaded needle. The needles in today's lancets are extremely fine, making testing virtually pain-free. The following tips will help you avoid discomfort associated with repeated fingertip testing.

Don't use rubbing alcohol

It's important to have clean hands before testing, as food on your fingertips could contaminate the blood sample. But cleaning with rubbing alcohol is not only unnecessary, repeated use will thicken the skin and make lancing more painful. Simply wash your hands in warm, soapy water. After testing, don't wipe the lancet with alcohol, as alcohol breaks down the silicone coating on the needle that makes it slip easily into your skin.

Get the blood flowing

In order to get an adequate blood sample, do you find yourself squeezing the blood out of your fingertip or using a deep-puncture setting on your lancet? If so, try improving the flow of blood to your fingers before lancing. Use warm water to wash, then let your arm hang down at your side for a minute or gently massage your finger from base to tip. After lancing, firmly press a clean tissue to the site for a few seconds until the bleeding stops to prevent bruising.

Experiment with different devices and lancets

There are a variety of different lancing devices and lancets on the market. Talk to your diabetes educator about which products are best for you. Many companies give educators free samples for clients to try.

Use lancets once

Using lancets make them duller; for the least amount of discomfort, use a lancet only once. If you have to re-use lancets because of their expense, limit each to two to four punctures maximum.

Try a shallower puncture

The deeper you lance, the more nerve endings you touch. Use a lancing device that allows you to dial the depth of the puncture, and select the lowest setting that gives you an adequate blood sample.

Pick your site

Avoid repeated testing in the same spot by alternating among all your fingers. Target the sides of your fingertips rather than the soft centre area. The sides have a more blood vessels and fewer nerve endings, giving you an adequate sample with less pain.

Although some lancing devices allow you to test in alternate sites, such as the forearm or thigh, the results from these sites may not be as accurate as those from fingertip testing when blood glucose (sugar) is changing rapidly, such after meals, physical activity or medications/insulin injections or during low blood glucose (hypoglycemia). Talk to your diabetes health-care professional about whether alternate site testing is right for you.

Use lotion

Using hand lotion regularly will help soften your fingertips and make testing easier. Make sure you wash off the lotion before each test.

Talk to your diabetes educator

If you are still experiencing pain with fingertip testing, consult your diabetes educator. He or she can help ensure that you are using the right products and techniques for you.



Content from:

<http://www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/healthy-living-resources/general-tips/lessening-the-pain-from-fingertip-testing>