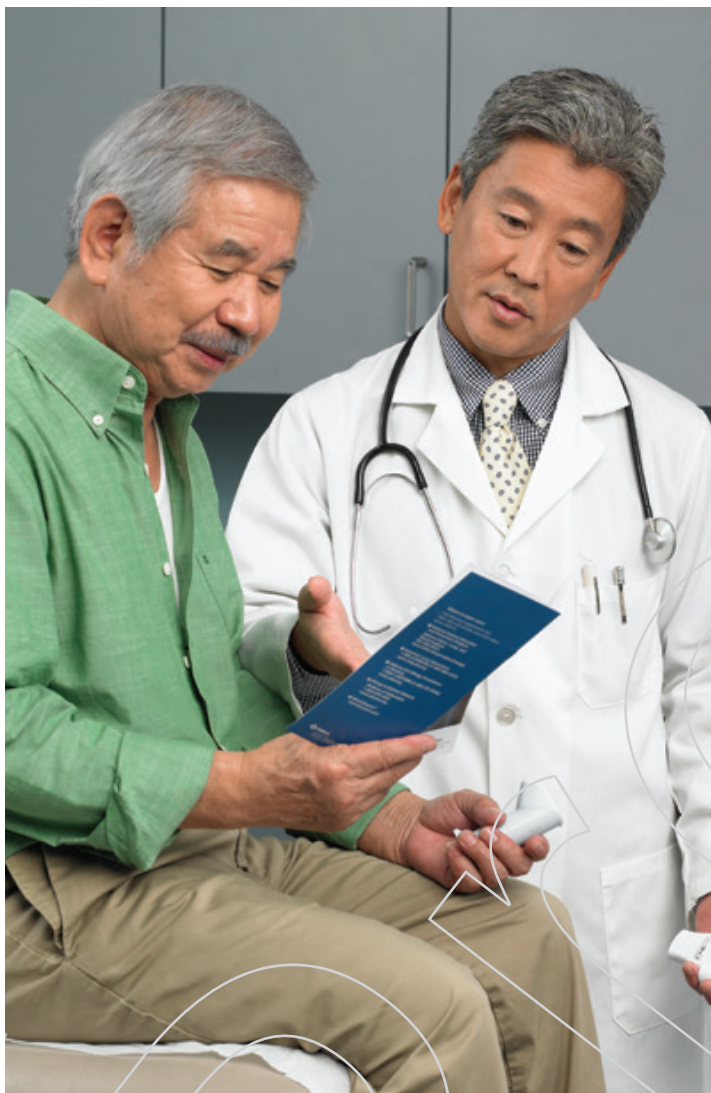


Diabetes: Know Your ABCs



This information will help you understand the ABCs of diabetes

“A” is for A1C.

“B” is for blood pressure.

“C” is for cholesterol.

You will learn how these and other needed tests help manage your diabetes. Your health care team will set goals for each. This information explains how to try to get to and stay close to your goals. Staying at or near these goals may help prevent or delay other health problems.

“A” is for A1C

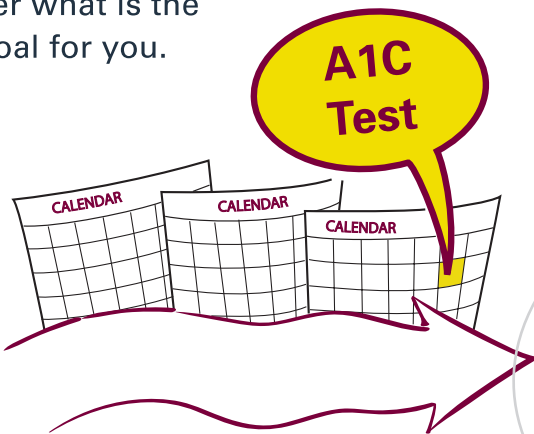
What is an A1C test?

A1C is also called hemoglobin A1C. It is a blood test that is usually done in a lab or your health care provider's office.

Your A1C is a blood test that measures the average of the amount of sugar in your blood over the past 2 to 3 months. Your A1C test results are given as a percentage.

Setting an A1C goal

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) suggests that many (nonpregnant) adults with diabetes should have an A1C goal of 7%. A1C goals for some people may need to be higher or lower. Ask your health care provider what is the right goal for you.



Your A1C may be tested every

- 3 months if you are not at your goal
- 6 months if you have reached your goal

Higher or lower A1C goals may be appropriate for some people. Your health care provider will set an A1C goal that is right for you.

Why is getting to your A1C goal important?

Your A1C level shows whether your blood sugar was under control over the past 2 to 3 months. Your A1C level will be high if you have too much sugar in your blood.

People with diabetes are at risk for many serious health problems, including:

- Heart and blood vessel disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Kidney disease
- Eye problems and blindness
- Gum disease
- Nerve disease: pain, numbness, loss of feeling in hands or feet, or sexual problems
- Dry, itchy skin and skin infections
- Wounds that are slow to heal





“A” is for A1C

A1C and blood sugar testing

Your self-tests with a blood sugar meter and the A1C test are different. Self-testing with a blood sugar meter shows your blood sugar at the time of the test. The A1C test shows an estimate of your blood sugar control over a longer period of time, ie, 2 to 3 months. You need both self-testing with a blood sugar meter and A1C tests to help you and your health care provider understand if your treatment plan is working and whether your blood sugar is controlled.

Your health care provider will tell you when and how to check your blood sugar at home.

Be sure to bring your blood sugar meter or write down your blood sugar readings. Take your list of readings to your appointments and discuss them with your health care provider.

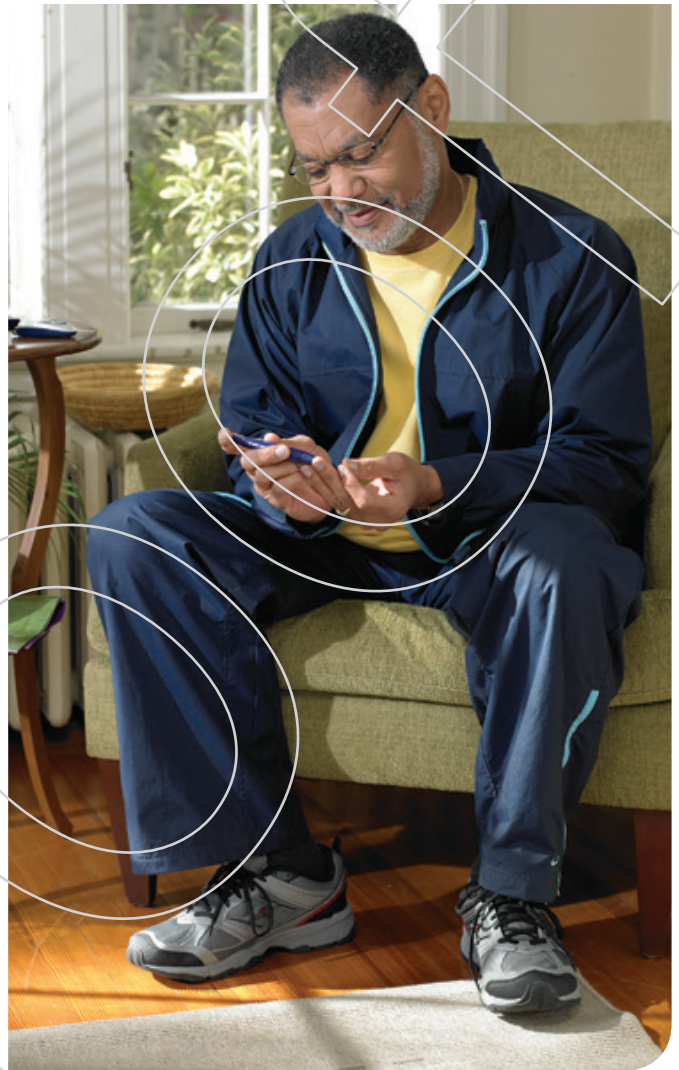
A main goal of managing diabetes is to keep your blood sugar under control. It may help reduce the risk of developing other health problems.

How can I help prevent high blood sugar levels?

If your blood sugar is too high, talk to your health care provider. Ask what changes may help you.

Here are some ways to lower your blood sugar:

- Get more active. Talk with your health care provider before making changes in your activity level.
- Eat healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish, and nonfat dairy products.
- Lose weight, if needed.
- Take the medicines that have been prescribed for you.
- Check your blood sugar as often as instructed. Discuss the results at each visit with your health care provider.



Ask your health care provider when and how often you should check your blood sugar.

“B” is for blood pressure

Your blood pressure should be checked every time you visit your health care provider.

What does my blood pressure mean?

Your blood pressure checks how hard your heart has to work to pump blood to your body. It is written as 1 number over another.

- The number on top is the systolic blood pressure: This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart pumps out blood.
- The number on the bottom is the diastolic blood pressure: This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats.

What is an appropriate blood pressure goal for a person with diabetes?

The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood pressure goal of **less than 140/90 mmHg** for adults with diabetes. A lower blood pressure goal may be appropriate for some patients. Ask your health care provider about the blood pressure goal that is right for you.

Ask your health care provider what your blood pressure should be.



Why is controlling blood pressure important?

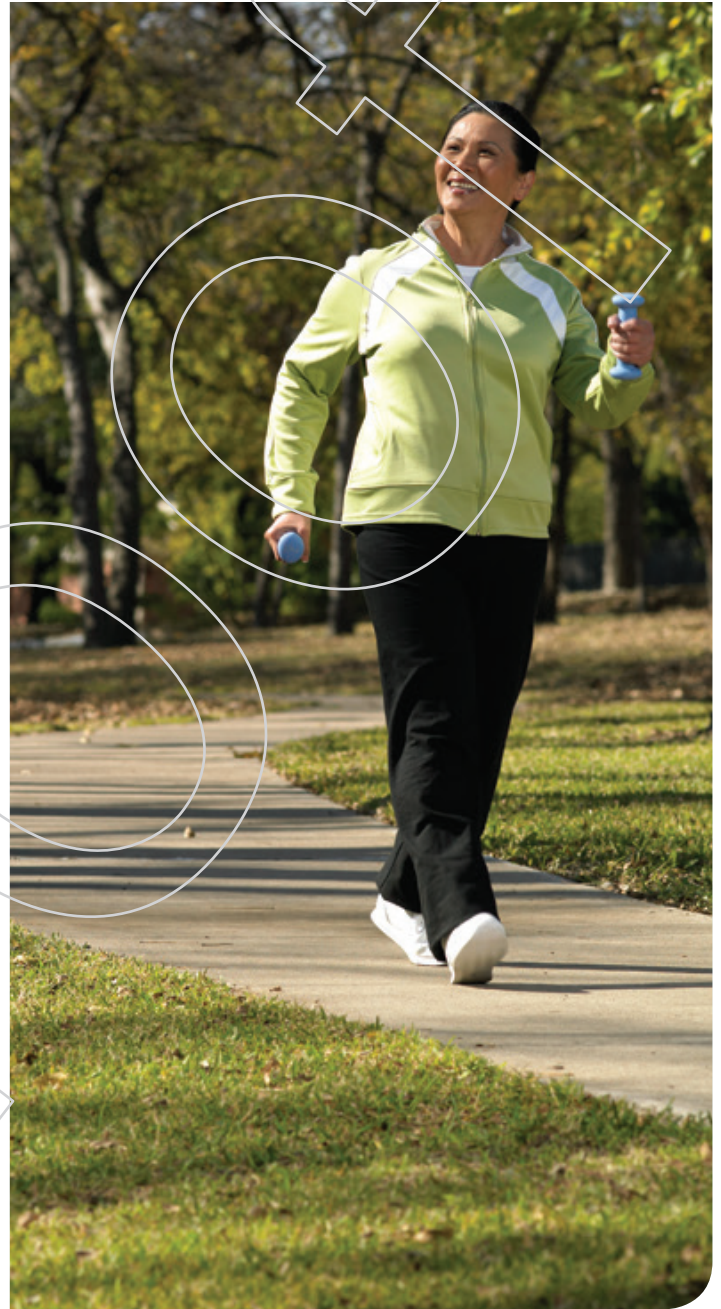
Many people with diabetes have high blood pressure. High blood pressure can damage your blood vessels. It may also lead to health problems over time.

Diabetes and high blood pressure increase the risk of:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Eye problems and blindness
- Kidney disease

How can I get to my blood pressure goal?

1. Use less salt and eat low-sodium or low-salt foods.
2. Lose weight if you are overweight.
3. Be more active.
4. Stop smoking.
5. Limit alcohol.
6. Take your blood pressure medicines as instructed by your health care provider.



Control your blood pressure. If it is high, lowering your blood pressure will help lower your chance of heart attack and stroke.



“C” is for cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance in the blood. Cholesterol levels are checked with a blood test. Cholesterol comes from your body and from food.

Lowering your LDL cholesterol can help reduce your risk of cardiovascular problems.

LDL and HDL are 2 types of cholesterol in your blood.

LDL or “bad” cholesterol

Too much LDL (bad) cholesterol in your blood can build up in your arteries and form plaque. This buildup of plaque can cause your blood vessels to harden. This can increase your risk of having heart disease.

HDL or “good” cholesterol

HDL is often called “good” because it can carry “bad” cholesterol away from the walls of your arteries. A high level of HDL may be linked with a lower risk of having heart disease.

What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are another type of fat in your blood. Your body uses triglycerides as a source of energy or stores them as fat.

Having high levels of triglycerides is not good for your health. Talk to your health care provider about your triglyceride levels.

What are the recommended goals for cholesterol and triglycerides?

Cholesterol goals for LDL, HDL, and triglycerides are not the same for every person with diabetes. Ask your health care provider about the cholesterol goals that are right for you.

If you have diabetes and are not taking medicine to lower your cholesterol, you should have your cholesterol checked at the time of diagnosis, and every 5 years after that, or more frequently, if needed.

Your health care provider will set goals that are right for you.

Ask your health care provider what is the best way you can help prevent heart disease.

Why is achieving goals for cholesterol and triglycerides important?

By managing your cholesterol and triglyceride levels, you can help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in people with diabetes.

Remember, it is good to have:

- **Lower** LDL cholesterol and triglycerides
- **Higher** HDL cholesterol



“C” is for cholesterol

How can I help improve my cholesterol and triglycerides?

If your cholesterol and triglycerides are too high, talk to your health care provider. Changes you can make include:

- Be more active. Exercise for at least 150 minutes a week spread over at least 3 days. Always talk to your health care provider before beginning any exercise program.
- Eat foods high in fiber. Eat low-cholesterol, low-fat foods, such as:
 - Fish, chicken, and turkey
 - Fat-free or low-fat milk and cheese
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Whole-grain cereals, breads, rice, and pasta
- Avoid foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol.
- Limit alcohol.
- Get to a healthy weight. Losing weight can help lower your triglyceride and LDL cholesterol levels.
- Take your cholesterol medicines the way your health care provider tells you

You and your health care provider will set goals that are right for you to help reduce your risk of future health problems. Taking care of your diabetes means more than just keeping your blood sugar under control.

Controlling blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol can help reduce the risk of long-term complications of diabetes.

Talk to your health care provider before you take any medicines or over-the-counter pills, including vitamins and herbal supplements.

Staying up to date with regular tests



Test/Exam	How Often It Is Done	Test Date	Result
A1C	2 to 4 times a year		
Blood pressure	Blood pressure should be checked at every visit with your health care provider		
Cholesterol and triglycerides	Cholesterol levels should be checked when you are diagnosed with diabetes and every 5 years (or more often, if needed).		

Ask your health care provider to explain and give you copies of your test results.

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