

Is Your Plan for Treating Your Diabetes Working?

When you have Type 2 Diabetes, many of the choices you make each day directly affect your blood glucose levels and overall health. You are doing your best to take control of your blood glucose results in order to reduce insulin resistance and prevent or delay the long term health problems diabetes can cause. And with that as your goal, it is important to know that your plan is working.

Each part of your diabetes management plan, including making healthy food choices, getting physical activity, taking medications if necessary and monitoring your blood glucose work together to keep your blood glucose level in a healthy range.

The best way to tell how well your plan is working is to check your blood glucose on a regular basis.

"I check my blood sugar three to four times a day. Before I eat. Before I exercise and after I exercise." – Judy, Patient

Work with your diabetes care team to establish a daily blood glucose target. This target is a range that you are aiming for each time you check your glucose and is specific for you depending on your health, age, activity level and other factors.

Your diabetes care team may recommend you check when you first wake up in the morning before you eat, or she may recommend you check 2 hours after starting a meal. The timing of your check is important so make sure you understand when and how often to check your blood glucose each day and the target you are aiming for at each check.

If the results of your home blood glucose checks often fall into your target range, you can feel confident that you are taking steps in the right direction to control your blood glucose. But if your results are often higher or lower than your target range, you may need to make adjustments to your management plan.

For example, if your glucose results are higher than your target range when you first wake up in the morning, you may need to make a change to your evening snack to lower your glucose.

It's important to know what your blood glucose is doing throughout the day to get an accurate picture of your overall control. If you always check your blood glucose at the same time each day, you will only see a portion of the picture.

Instead, talk to your diabetes care team about checking at different times during the day so you have a more complete picture of your overall blood glucose control and can make changes to your management plan if needed.

Another way to see how well your management plan is working is with regular A1c tests.

The A1c is a blood test that shows how well you have managed your blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months and is

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done at your doctor's office or a lab.

"When I was diagnosed with diabetes my A1c level was 11; it was pretty high. My numbers were reading in the 300s so yeah, I was pretty bad when I found out." - Ann, Patient

People without diabetes have an A1C range of 4%-6%. A common goal if you have diabetes is to keep your A1C level below 7% but your doctor may have a different target for you. A1C readings of less than 7% mean that you may have a better chance of delaying or preventing the long-term complications of diabetes.

"You know, with exercise and diet I've now brought my A1c down to 7.3." - Ann, Patient

Remember, if your daily home blood glucose checks are often high, your A1c result will most likely be high as well. If your A1c result is higher than 7%, go over your management plan with your diabetes care team and make adjustments.

Make sure your management plan is working for you. Monitor your blood glucose levels each day with home blood glucose checks and get regular A1c tests.

Getting your glucose levels in a healthy range and keeping them there is the key to diabetes self-management and maintaining good health for the long-term.