

Managing Your Diabetes: Monitoring

Narrator

When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should to regulate your blood sugar (or glucose) levels. Since blood sugar is your main source of fuel, it's critical to check it regularly to avoid problems with your eyes, kidneys, heart and feet.

Cecilia Sauter, Diabetes Educator, University of Michigan

Keeping your blood sugar on target is important. Knowing your blood sugar is helpful in deciding what to eat and how to be active so your body can perform at its best. With regular monitoring, you can quickly find out if your blood sugar is too high or too low and get it back on track.

Bethany Maranowicz, Diabetes Patient

I'll just set out my meter at my spot at the table, just to remind me like, yes, I'm going to check my blood sugar before I eat.

Narrator

Being a working mom with young kids AND a person with diabetes, Bethany Maranowicz says checking her blood sugar levels several times a day can be a challenge. But she's learned some simple tricks to remind her.

Bethany Maranowicz, Diabetes Patient

My purse is kind of my go-to. That's kind of where my testing supplies always are so that I know if I'm heading out the door, I always have it with me: enough test strips, my meter, my poker for my finger, and then I also always carry a juice box with me in case of a low blood sugar, to bring that level back up.

Narrator

Bethany also monitors everything she eats, reading nutrition labels and measuring her portion sizes.

Bethany Maranowicz, Diabetes Patient

Kind of making sure I'm getting all the food groups at a meal and that's going to kind of keep your blood sugar, my blood sugar more steady, making sure my meals are balanced.

Narrator

Dan Diliberti, who's had diabetes for 20 years, has a few tips of his own, including monitoring himself when he is stressed.

Dan Diliberti, Diabetes Patient

I do meditation and breathing exercises to kind of calm me down. I go for walks when it happens. It really helps me a lot when I just walk it out, and that brings my sugar level down, too.

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Your healthcare provider will determine how often you need to check your blood sugar. This will depend on the type of diabetes you have and the medications, pills, or insulin that you take. You may need to monitor only a few times a week or as often as 3 to 7 times a day.

Your diabetes educator can help with monitoring, teaching you:

- How to use the glucometer
- When to check your blood sugar, what the numbers mean and what to do if they're off target, and
- How to record your results and keep track over time

It's normal for your blood sugar levels to go up and down during the day, depending on how recently you've eaten and how active you are. Remember, it takes two hours after eating for monitoring to reflect your true blood sugar level.

Monitoring is not your responsibility alone. Your healthcare team also should do regular exams for:

- Long-term blood sugar control
- Heart health - blood pressure, weight and cholesterol levels
- Kidney health – through urine and blood testing
- Eye health, and
- Foot health and sensory testing

Dan Diliberti, Diabetes Patient

The more information you have, the better off you are. So, I do go to the doctor regularly. I have a foot doctor that checks my feet because you lose feeling in your feet. I get eye exams. You can have eye damage to your retinas from diabetes. Anything that's nerve related can be effected. Your hearing? I get regular hearing tests.

Jasmine Gonzalvo, Pharmacist, Diabetes Educator, Purdue University

It will take a little while for you to know how your sugars will change from food and daily activity. With careful monitoring, you can learn to make adjustments and manage your diabetes so that you can stay healthy.

Narrator

Monitoring. One of 7 steps to a healthier you.