

# Diabetes: Testing Your Blood Sugar

When you have diabetes, testing your blood sugar—and knowing your level—gives you more control over your life.

It helps you treat low or high blood sugar before it becomes an emergency.

It helps you know how exercise and food affect your blood sugar.

And if you take insulin, it can help you adjust how much you take.

Testing is quick—it only takes a minute or two—and the results are fast and easy to understand.

When you get ready to test, follow the instructions on your meter.

In general, this what you'll learn to do.

First, gather the things you'll need to do the test: your meter, the needle or lancet, the lancet holder, test strips, and cotton balls. Set them on a clean surface like a table or counter.

Check the expiration date on your test strips. Expired strips can give inaccurate results.

If your meter needs calibrating, be sure the code number on the bottle of test strips matches the number on your meter.

If the numbers don't match, follow the directions that come with your meter for changing the code number.

Wash your hands really well before and after you test.

Use warm, soapy water, and then dry your hands well with a clean towel.

Next, put a clean needle or lancet in the lancet device.

The lancet device is a pen-sized holder for the lancet.

It holds the lancet in place and controls how deeply the lancet goes into your skin.

Get the test strip ready.

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Take one strip from the bottle of test strips, and don't forget to put the lid back on the bottle right after removing the strip.

Follow the directions to prepare your meter to receive the blood sample.

Now it's time to prick your finger.

Use the lancet device to prick the side of your fingertip with the lancet.

Now test a small sample of your blood. Put a drop of blood on the correct spot of the test strip, covering the test area well.

It's easy to stop the bleeding using a clean cotton ball.

Apply pressure to your fingertip to stop the bleeding.

Wait for the results—it usually only takes a few seconds—and save them to your meter or write them down.

Recording your blood sugar results is really important.

Your doctor will use your record to see how often your blood sugar levels are in your target range.

Understanding your tests results can also help you feel your best and live better with diabetes.