



## Tips on finger pricking

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water, and dry them thoroughly.
2. Hang your arm down for about 30 seconds. (This will help increase blood flow to your fingertips).
3. Massage your finger from the base to the tip to help blood flow.
4. If your finger pricker is depth adjustable, make sure it is at the right depth.
5. Prick the side of the finger near the tip. Using the side of the finger is less painful than using the pad of the finger. Use a different finger for each test.



6. Massage the finger towards the tip until you produce enough blood for the test strip.
7. Apply the blood to the test strip according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## Regular testing promotes good health

You can see how well your meals, physical activity, tablets or insulin are working by testing your blood glucose regularly and keeping a record. This will help you identify patterns, which will assist in making decisions about your diabetes management. Ask your doctor or nurse educator for a record book, or download one from the Internet. See the DNZ website for more details.

This pamphlet is compiled by  
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### Other brochures and booklets available:

- Living With Diabetes and Insulin
- It's Time to Shed Some Light on Type 2 Diabetes
- New Zealand Supermarket Shopping Guide
- A Basic Guide to Food for People With Diabetes
- Testing Your Blood Glucose
- Diabetes and Physical Activity
- Walking for Health, A Guide to using Pedometers
- Diabetes and Your Kidneys
- Cardiovascular Risk and Diabetes
- Diabetes and Your Eyes
- Diabetes and Your Feet
- Diabetes and Pregnancy

# TESTING YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS



DIABETES NEW ZEALAND



## What testing your own blood glucose levels can do for you

Learning how to test your own blood glucose levels can help you take control of your diabetes. Testing will let you know how your blood glucose management is going, and whether your blood glucose levels are in your target zone (ask your health professional).

Testing can be very encouraging and motivating for you. You can see the impact on your blood glucose levels of the strategies you are using to manage your diabetes (e.g. being more active, modifying your food, taking medication).

Testing can help you find out more about specific foods you are eating, and how they affect your blood glucose levels.

Testing your blood glucose levels can tell you if your blood glucose levels are too high or too low. You can take the right actions, or get help, to get your levels back into your target zone.

## How to test your blood glucose levels

It is easy to learn how to test your own blood glucose levels. All test strips come with a meter or machine to read the test strip. There is a range of meters available and they are all very easy and quick to use. They are also very affordable.

Talk to your health professional about a blood glucose testing system that will suit you. Diabetes Supplies Ltd offers a range of meters for sale, or free of charge if you have a community services card or a high use health card. For more information on this, talk to your GP or Practice Nurse or Diabetes Supplies Ltd, Ph: 0800 342238.

Ask your health professional to arrange for you to be taught how to use the system you choose. If you use your equipment incorrectly it can give you results that are wrong.

Testing involves lightly pricking your finger to get a small drop of blood to apply to a test strip. Modern finger prickers are very gentle; you will soon be expert at pricking your finger with minimal discomfort.

## HbA1C

This gives a measure of overall blood glucose levels over the last four to six weeks (but it is not an average of blood sugar results). Depending on your age and type of diabetes your doctor will indicate a value that you should aim for. This test should be performed at least annually but for some people, more frequent testing is a good idea.

## Safety

Never share finger prickers with anyone else. This can put you and others at risk of getting a blood borne disease. Dispose of finger prickers in a responsible manner. Ask your local diabetes society, pharmacy or rubbish collectors what the best disposal method is in your area.



## When to test

There are a number of different times to test your blood glucose levels. The times you test will depend on a range of factors such as:

- Whether you take insulin for your diabetes, and which type you take
- Whether your diabetes is stable
- If you use your testing as a motivational tool (to help you stay on track)
- If you are starting on a new medication
- If you are well or sick
- If you are making changes to your usual routine, changing your job, or travelling

It is always best to test in a way that lets you pick up 'patterns' in your blood glucose levels. This means testing across the day to create a 'profile' of what your blood glucose levels are like at different times of the day.

Common times to test are before meals and before bed or 1½ - 2 hours after meals. If you are on medication that can cause your blood glucose levels to go low, an occasional test at about 2.00-3.00am may help you manage low blood glucose levels during the night.

Talk to your health professional about a testing pattern that will suit you.