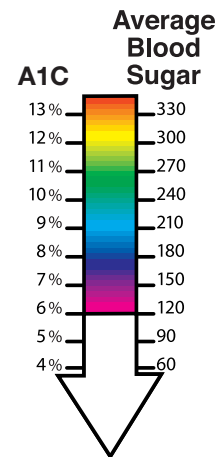




Diabetes Self-Management NOW

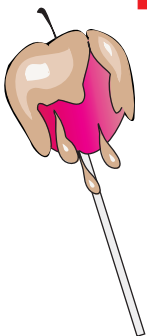
THE A1C TEST* “TELLS IT LIKE IT IS”

- The A1C...tells how well your diabetes is managed.
- The A1C...looks back in time and shows how your blood sugar levels have been over the past 2 or 3 months.
- As the arrow shows, if the A1C is 7%, the daily blood sugar over the last 2–4 months was usually about 150.
- The A1C...is different from daily blood sugar levels. Remember, blood sugars change hour by hour, and the fingerstick only shows one point in time.

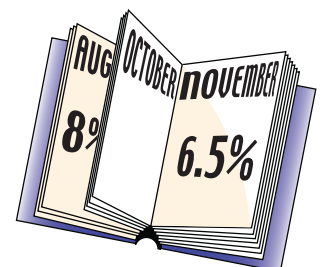


Hmmm...HOW DOES THE A1C TEST “WORK”?

- A1C is part of the red blood cells in your blood stream. You have lots of red blood cells in your blood stream, so you have a lot of A1C.
- Sugar in the bloodstream sticks to the A1C. It is kind of like caramel sticking to an apple! Think of the A1C in a red blood cell as the apple, and the caramel as the sugar coating.
- If there is a lot of sugar in the blood, there will be a lot of sugar sticking to the A1C in the red blood cells.
- Each red blood cell lives for only 3-4 months, then a new one takes its place.
- The A1C test gives a more complete picture of the blood sugars over the past 3-4 months.
- That is why sometimes the A1C may look higher than the daily fingerstick reading. The A1C is a picture of ALL the blood sugars, even at times when you didn't test your blood sugar.



- That is also why, if you have had a very high A1C, but you take really good care of yourself by exercising, following your meal plan, and taking your medicine, you could see your A1C change to a much lower level in just a few months.



* formerly called the Hemoglobin A1C, or HbA1c test

WELL...WHAT IS A NORMAL A1C?

- The lab will tell you your A1C as a percentage.
- A normal level for a person without diabetes is from 4 to 6%.
- The target level for A1C in people with diabetes is 7% or less.**
- 7% or less is the level that will help you have fewer problems from your diabetes.
- **But...**Every time your A1C goes lower than the last test, you have a better chance of not having problems with your heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

SO...WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE AN A1C TEST?

- The A1C test gives a picture of blood sugar control over time.
- The A1C test can help you and your doctor or diabetes educator catch problems with your blood sugar control and make changes in your care, such as:
 - Planning your meals better
 - Being more active
 - Changing medications

O.K., THEN... HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU HAVE AN A1C TEST?

- The A1C test should be done every 3 to 6 months.
- Ask your healthcare professional or diabetes educator to do an A1C test.
- Keep your own record of how you're doing.

** *Recommendation of the American Diabetes Association*



STEPS TO TAKE

My A1C level now is: _____.

I want my A1C level to be: _____
in _____ months time.

The way that I will do this is **(Choose 1 or 2):**

Increase my physical activity by

_____ minutes, _____ days a week.

Have checkups with my healthcare professional as asked.

Next appointment: _____.

Follow my meal plan, or schedule a meeting with an educator to plan my meals. Appointment: _____.

Test my blood sugar _____ times a day, or _____ times a week.

Take my medicines on time.

Get my A1C test at least 2 times a year. Next test due: _____.

Other: _____.