

Understanding Diabetes: The Basics

TESTS THAT SHOW DIABETES CONTROL

Why do I have to have so many tests?

Diabetes is a complicated disease. Over time diabetes can cause changes in your heart, blood vessels, kidneys and nerves. The more your health care team knows about your body, the easier it is to treat your diabetes. Keeping your blood glucose in control will help you stay healthy. These tests show how you are doing keeping your blood glucose in control. The health care team can use these tests to decide if you need to change your medicines, insulin or diet.



Common Tests

Blood Glucose—Everyone with diabetes should test their own blood glucose at home. This tells you what your blood glucose is right away. Knowing your blood glucose level can help you make decisions about food and exercise every day. If you don't know how often to test your own blood glucose—ask your doctor or diabetes educator. Guidelines for good control of blood glucose are:

Before Meals	Between 80 – 120 mg/dL
1-2 Hours After a Meal	Less than 160 mg/dL
At Bedtime	Between 100 – 140 mg/dL

Glycosylated hemoglobin or Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c)—This test shows what your blood glucose has been over the last three months. It gives the health care team information so you can plan for the next step in your diabetes care. This test should be done about every 3 to 6 months.

Microalbumin—This is a urine test to check how your kidneys are working. A microalbumin test should be done once a year. If a kidney problem is found early, it can be treated.

Provided by the



Creatinine—is a blood test that also checks how your kidneys are working. This test should be done once a year.

Lipid Profile—This blood test checks the amount of fat in your blood. If you have a lot of fat in your blood, you can get heart disease. Heart disease is the number one cause of death for people with diabetes. A lipid profile also checks the kinds of fat in your blood, like cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL cholesterol (“good” cholesterol) and LDL (“bad” cholesterol). You should have a lipid profile once a year.

GOOD

Total Cholesterol	less than 200 mg/dL
LDL	less than 100 mg/dL
HDL	over 45 mg/dL
Triglycerides	less than 200 mg/dL

BORDERLINE

Total Cholesterol	200-239 mg/dL
LDL	100-129 mg/dL
HDL	35-45 mg/dL
Triglycerides	200-300 mg/dL

HIGH

Total Cholesterol	over 240 mg/dL
LDL	over 130 mg/dL
HDL	less than 35 mg/dL
Triglycerides	over 400 mg/dL

Eye exam—Diabetes can cause blindness. People with diabetes need to see an ophthalmologist (medical doctor who specializes in eye disease) every year. The ophthalmologist will do a “dilated” eye exam. The doctor will use eye drops to dilate (open) the pupil so they can see the retina in the back of the eye. People with diabetes can get a disease called retinopathy. This is what causes blindness. If the doctor finds it early, it can be treated.

If you don't have an eye doctor you can ask your doctor or educator to help you find the health care you need.

You should keep track of your tests so you can see how you are managing your diabetes. Take a list like this to your doctor visits. Write your results down every time you go to the doctor.

Test	Result	Target
HbA1c		
Weight		
B/P		
Cholesterol		
Triglycerides		
HDL		
LDL		
Microalbumin		

Where to learn more?

The following books are available for loan to members of the Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland. You may visit our library from 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday, or check your local library.

Edelman, Steven V., MD., Henry, Robert R., MD., **Diagnosis and Management of Type 2 Diabetes**. Cado, OK: Professional Communications, 1999

Valentine, Virginia, Biermann, June, Toohey, Barbara: **Type 2 And What to Do**. Lincolnwood, IL: Lowell House, 1998

- Ask your doctor, diabetes educator, or registered dietitian for more information.
- Contact the:



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