

infection or other illness, or the need for a different medication. By determining the source of the problem, your provider can decide whether or not your treatment plan should be adjusted.

**Q** **Why do I need to take the HbA1c test if I self-monitor my blood sugar every day?**

**A** While self-monitoring of daily blood sugar levels gives you an immediate "snap-shot" of your blood sugar levels, the HbA1c gives you a bigger picture of your glucose levels over a longer period of time. And because of this, it provides you and your diabetes health care team a better look at how your diet, medication, and lifestyle are working for your overall diabetes health.

Of course, you should continue self-monitoring every day—because the tighter your daily glucose control, the better your HbA1c result will be.

**Q** **How do I take the HbA1c test?**

**A** Actually, it's very simple. Your health care provider takes a small sample of your blood and sends it to a laboratory for analysis. This small blood sample can be taken at any time of day.

Once the results come back, he or she will contact you to discuss them.

**Q** **How often should I have it done?**

**A** You should have the test done at least twice a year. If you're having high blood sugar levels or a change in your treatment plan, you should have the test more often to help keep control of your glucose levels.

Your diabetes health care team will determine what schedule is best for you.

**For  
people  
with  
diabetes**

**Test your control.**

**Take  
the  
HbA1c  
test.**



**Take control of your diabetes.**

**Take the HbA1c test regularly.**

As you know, diabetes isn't always easy to manage. But by using blood glucose measures like the hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test you're doing the best you can to take control of diabetes and stay healthy. Recent study has shown that, for most people, the more your HbA1c levels stay below 7%, the better. That's why we encourage you to take your HbA1c test—and get the exercise, diet, and regular checkups you need as part of your overall diabetes management plan.

**Q What is the HbA1c test?**

**A** It's a simple blood test that measures your average blood glucose (sugar) amount over the past three to four months. It is the best test to find out if your blood sugar is under control.

**Q How does the test work?**

**A** The HbA1c test measures your glucose level by finding the amount of sugar in your bloodstream. Sometimes, glucose attaches itself to a part of the red blood cell called "hemoglobin." Once attached, the sugar stays there for the rest of the cell's life (approximately 120 days). By looking at red blood cells, the HbA1c test tells you what your average blood glucose levels have been in recent months.

**Q What will the results tell me?**

**A** The results of your HbA1c test will be in a percentage—the lower the percentage, the better your glucose control. Most people with diabetes should strive for less than 7% on their HbA1c test. Talk to your physician to see what your goal should be. Together with your diabetes care team, you can work to achieve it.

**Q How will this test help me?**

**A** By finding out how well you've been controlling your blood glucose level over the last few months, you and your health care professional can tell if the methods you're using to control your diabetes are working for you. If your glucose levels haven't been where they should be, you and your diabetes health team will develop a plan of action to help you get your levels where they need to be—and help you stay healthy.

Studies show that lowering your glucose levels really makes a difference. In fact, the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial (DCCT)—a major diabetes study—found that a glycated hemoglobin level below 7% can help delay or prevent eye, kidney, and nerve disease in people with diabetes.

That's why it's very important to know your HbA1c level!

**Q What should I do if my HbA1c results are above 7%?**

**A** Talk to your physician. For most people with diabetes, the goal is an HbA1c result of less than 7%. If your physician determines that your HbA1c level is high, he or she may begin by reviewing your glucose self-monitoring record. Causes may include your eating habits, a lack of exercise, stress, an

