

Memorandum

TO: Diabetes Care and Education Dietetic Practice Group (DCE DPG) members

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DCE Chair 2009-2010
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TOPIC: Reproduction of the education handout *Know Your Blood Glucose Numbers*.

The educational handout *Know Your Blood Glucose Numbers* was originally developed in 2005 by the DCE DPG, authored by Lynne Lyons, MPH, RD, CDE, a registered dietitian who is a member of the DCE DPG of the American Dietetic Association. The handout has since been updated and may be reproduced for educational purposes only through 2012 with credit granted to DCE. Reproduction for sales purposes is not authorized. Please check the DCE website at www.dce.org or contact the DCE Publications Chair for the status of this educational handout after the expiration date.

Know Your Blood Glucose Numbers

A nutrition resource for living well with diabetes

Why should I check my blood glucose?

Your glucose numbers give you important feedback on how your meal plan, activity and medications are working.

Your glucose numbers often change — throughout the day, week and month. To make sure that your glucose is within your target range, you may need to check your blood glucose at different times of the day or week.

Don't rely on "how you feel" to predict whether your blood glucose is high or low. These feelings are often inaccurate. The best way to know your glucose number is to check.

How often should I check my blood glucose?

If you don't take insulin to control your diabetes, there is no set number of times each day to check your blood glucose. Discuss how often you should check your blood glucose with your diabetes care

team. If there is a change in your treatment, activities or health, check your glucose more often to see how the changes affect your usual pattern.

If you take insulin, the American Diabetes Association recommends checking your blood glucose three to four times per day.

When should I check my blood glucose?

When you check your blood glucose depends on what you want to learn. Here are some key times to check your glucose:

- Any time you feel it might be low. Symptoms of low blood glucose include sweating, shakiness, weakness, hunger, and confusion. Some people cannot feel when their glucose is low. This is called hypoglycemia unawareness. If this is the case, you may need to check your glucose more often to make sure that you are safe.



- Before and after activity
- When you're sick
- To see how a meal affects your blood glucose — check before and two hours after the meal
- Before driving
- To see how certain medications affect your blood glucose, especially if there has been a change in your medications
- First thing in the morning (fasting) — if your glucose level is in target range it shows that your body is making enough insulin overnight or that your diabetes medications are working overnight

Blood Glucose Targets	American Diabetes Association	American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
Fasting or before meals	70-130 mg/dl	Less than 110 mg/dl
Two hours after the start of a meal or snack	Less than 180 mg/dl	Less than 140 mg/dl

Keeping track – understanding your results

Your blood glucose record helps you identify patterns and assess how your lifestyle choices and/or medications affect your blood glucose. It doesn't matter how you record your blood glucose numbers — whether it's in a log book, on a sheet of paper, or a computer program — it's just important that you do it! Additionally, recording the food and amount you eat, your activity, and the medications you take will help you understand what may be causing your blood glucose highs or lows.

Below is a sample record that lists different times and days of the week to check your blood glucose. This helps to show the effects of different meals and fasting patterns during the week. Check with your diabetes care team or health care provider for guidelines on when you should check your blood glucose.

	Fasting	After Breakfast	Before Lunch	After Lunch	Before Dinner	After Dinner	Bedtime
Monday	✓	✓					
Tuesday			✓	✓			
Wednesday					✓	✓	
Thursday	✓	✓					
Friday			✓	✓			
Saturday					✓	✓	
Sunday	✓						✓

As you review your blood glucose numbers, look for patterns that occur at about the same time each day. For example, you might notice that your blood glucose is usually high after breakfast. By checking your blood glucose before and two hours after breakfast, you can determine whether the amount of carbohydrates you are eating for breakfast is too much. Or maybe you find that your fasting blood glucose tends to run lower on the weekend. If your blood glucose is regularly high or low at certain times of the day, you may need a change in your meal plan, activity or medication.

Take your records to each visit with your registered dietitian and other members of your diabetes care team and always talk with your health care provider before you make any medication changes.

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For more information: Contact the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org

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