Monitoring for Diabetes

There are two blood tests that help you monitor and manage your diabetes. These include:

- **An A1c (*hemoglobin A1c*) test.**
  - This test is an average of your glucose (or *blood sugar*) control over the past 3 months.
  - This is recommended as a way for you and your caregiver to understand how well your glucose levels are controlled on the average.
  - Your A1c goal will be determined by your caregiver, but it is usually best if it is less than 6.5% to 7.0%.
  - Glucose (*sugar*) attaches itself to red blood cells. The amount of glucose then can then be measured. The amount of glucose on the cells depends on how high your blood glucose has been.
- **SMBG test (self-monitoring blood glucose).**
  - Using a blood glucose monitor (meter) to do SMBG testing is an easy way to monitor the amount of glucose in your blood and can help you improve your control. The monitor will tell you what your blood glucose is at that very moment. Every person with diabetes should have a blood glucose monitor and know how to use it. The better you control your blood sugar on a daily basis, the better your A1c levels will be.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I HAVE AN A1C LEVEL?

- Every 3 months if your diabetes is not well controlled or if therapy has changed.
- Every 6 months if you are meeting your treatment goals.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DO SMBG TESTING?

Your caregiver will recommend how often you should test. Testing times are based on the kind of medicine you take, type of diabetes you have, and your blood glucose control. Testing times can include:

- Type 1 diabetes: test 3 or 4 times a day or as directed.
- Type 2 diabetes and if you are taking insulin and diabetes pills: test 3 or 4 times a day or as directed.
- If you are taking diabetes pills only and not reaching your target A1c: test 2 to 4 times a day or as directed.
- If you are taking diabetes pills and are controlling your diabetes well with diet and exercise, your caregiver will help you decide what is appropriate.

WHAT TIME OF DAY SHOULD I TEST?

The best time of day to test your blood glucose depends on medications, mealtimes, exercise, and blood glucose control. It is best to test at different times because this will help you know how you are doing throughout the day. Your caregiver will help you decide what is best.

WHAT SHOULD MY BLOOD GLUCOSE BE?

Blood glucose target goals may vary depending on each persons needs, whether they have type 1 or type 2 diabetes or what medications they are taking. However, as a general rule, blood glucose should be:

- Before meals……70-130 mg/dl.
- After meals ……..less than 180 mg/dl.

CHECK YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE IF:

- You have symptoms of low blood sugar (*hypoglycemia*), which may include dizziness, shaking, sweating, chills and confusion.
- You have symptoms of high blood sugar (*hyperglycemia*), which may include sleepiness, blurred vision, frequent urination and excessive thirst.
- You are learning how meals, physical activity and medicine affect your blood glucose level. The more you learn about how various foods, your medications, and activities affect you, the better job you will do of taking care of yourself.
- You have a job in which poor control could cause safety problems while driving or operating machinery.

CHECK YOUR BLOOD SUGAR MORE FREQUENTLY:

- If you have medication or dietary changes.
- If you begin taking other kinds of medicines.
- If you become sick or your level of stress increases. With an illness, your blood sugar may even be high without eating.
- Before and after exercise.

Follow your caregiver's testing recommendations during this time.

TO DISPOSE OF SHARPES:

Each city or state may have different regulations. Check with your public works or waste management department.

- Sharps containers can be purchased from pharmacies
- Place all used sharps in a container. You do not need to replace any protective covers over the needle or break the needle.
- Sharps should be contained in a ridge, leakproof, puncture-resistant container.
  - Plastic detergent bottle
  - Bleach bottle
- When container is almost full, add a solution that is 1 part laundry bleach and 9 parts tap water (it is ok to use undiluted bleach if you wish). You may want to wear gloves since bleach can damage tissue. Let the solution sit for 30 minutes.
- Carefully pour all the liquid into the sanitary sewer. Be sure to prevent the sharps from falling out.
- Once liquid is drained, reseal the container with lid and tape it shut with duct tape. This will prevent the cap from coming off.
- Dispose of the container with your regular household trash and waste. It is a good idea to let your trash hauler know that you will be disposing of sharps.

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