



SIMPLE
ANSWERS

USING YOUR METER LIKE
A PRO



FROM: DELAINE WRIGHT, MS, RCEP, CDE, FIT4D DIRECTOR AND HEAD COACH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) How can my blood glucose meter help me manage highs and lows?

If you are living with diabetes, then you know that blood glucose levels are continually changing. This is a result of many variables, including food choices, exercise, stress, illness, and the effect of certain oral medications or insulin. The American Diabetes Association recommends the following blood glucose goals for non-pregnant adults with diabetes*:

- Fasting/pre-meal blood sugars 70-130 mg
- 2 hour post meal blood glucose less than 180 mg/dl

Use your meter to determine if there is a pattern with consistent high or low blood glucose levels at different times of the day. Once you identify where you are typically out of your target range, you have a number of different options to improve your control using medication, activity or changes in your food intake. (Remember to discuss any changes to your diabetes management plan with your healthcare provider.) For example, if your high blood glucose levels are occurring 1-2 hours after a meal, you can learn to adjust the carbohydrate content of that meal. Bayer's CONTOUR® and CONTOUR® USB meters make it easy to identify which tests were taken before and after a meal with their pre- and post-meal markers. If you currently use mealtime insulin, you can learn to adjust your insulin-to-carb ratio to better match your post-meal insulin needs with the guidance of your healthcare provider.

Consistently elevated fasting or pre-meal blood glucose levels may require an adjustment in medication or "basal" insulin dosages. Regularly occurring low blood sugars may also require a change to your medication, an adjustment in carbohydrate intake, or both. Bayer's CONTOUR® meter has programmable personal hi/lo settings so you can easily identify trouble spots and adjust your insulin dose accordingly along with your healthcare provider.

Of course, increased activity and managing your weight may improve overall blood glucose control as well. The choices you make can have a tremendous effect on your well-being. A Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) and your healthcare provider can assist you with finding the right treatment plan.





2) What could affect the accuracy of my blood glucose meter?

There are many issues that can affect the accuracy of your meter, such as coding errors, proper testing technique, and environmental factors. Here are some tips to help increase the accuracy of your blood glucose meter:

- Check that your meter is coded correctly (see meter user guide for details) or choose a meter that uses No Coding™ technology, such as Bayer's CONTOUR®, CONTOUR® USB or Bayer's BREEZE®2 meter. No Coding™ technology eliminates inaccurate results due to miscoding.
- Do not use expired strips or those from a cracked or damaged vial or disc.
- Proper handling and storage of your meter and strips is important. The accuracy of your test strips and meter may be affected by low and high temperatures, humidity, and high altitude. Be sure to read your meter user guide and the package insert included with your strips for details.
- *Wash your hands.* Even small amounts of food or sugar on your fingers may affect your results.
- Be sure to use test strips that are recommended for your meter.
- Obtain an appropriate size drop of blood before applying to test strip.
- If needed, use your meter's control solution, as directed in your meter user guide, to make sure your meter and strips are working properly.
- Practice your techniques with a certified diabetes educator or your healthcare provider.

3) How can I use my meter to help manage my diabetes?

Your blood glucose testing schedule needs to be individualized and developed in partnership with your diabetes care team. If you are tightly controlling blood glucose levels using insulin-to-carb ratios and correction factors to adjust insulin dosages, you will need to test more frequently than someone who is managing their diabetes on oral pills or with diet and exercise alone.

Learning to look at glucose patterns at various times of the day can provide a good picture of how well your current diabetes management therapy (pills, insulin, diet alone) is working to keep glucose levels to goal. Many people on multiple daily injections or insulin pump therapy are testing 3+ times daily. Depending on their blood glucose control, those on certain types of oral pills may test 1-2+ daily – ideally varying the time of day that they test. Others “test in blocks” or test more frequently (i.e., 4x day) for 3-4 days in a row, once monthly. More frequent testing may also be important when you are ill or having frequent hypoglycemia. Discuss a monitoring plan, including how often and when, with your healthcare team. Learn to use your meter as a tool to optimally manage your diabetes.

*Talk with your healthcare provider about your individualized blood glucose goals.

References: American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org
American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases: <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov>

