

## Checking Your Blood Sugar

### What is self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG)?

SMBG refers to testing your blood glucose at home on a regular basis.

### Why test?

Testing blood glucose at home is the only way you can learn how your body reacts to food, activity, and medication. It also lets you see how your blood glucose responds to stress or illness. Feeling okay is not always a good clue as to what your blood glucose level is.

### How often should you test?

The number of tests needed can vary from one person to another. For example, if someone is treated with diet and exercise, they may need to test 1-2 times a day. Someone on insulin may need to test 4 or more times a day. Testing 2 hours after a meal lets you see how certain kinds and amounts of food affect your blood glucose. Your doctor or diabetes educator can help you figure out often you should test at home.

**The more you test, the more you know how well your diabetes plan (eating, activity and medication) is working for you to keep you well.**

Recommendation for you: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Are the home testing supplies covered by insurance?

By Pennsylvania law, insurance companies pay for at least part of the cost of blood glucose testing supplies. Call the insurance company before you buy supplies. Sometimes they want you to get supplies at a certain store. Sometimes it is cheaper to get supplies through your medical benefit rather than through your pharmacy benefit. **Shop around!** Prices can vary.

### How do I get started?

A diabetes educator can help you decide which blood glucose meter would be best for you. She or he can also help you learn how to use it. All meters have a telephone number on the back so you can call for help.



## Important Points in Self Blood Glucose Monitoring



- 1. All blood glucose meters require a good drop of blood to be able to give you a result. These tips may help you get a good drop.**
  - Wash your hands with soap and warm water. This is better than alcohol. If you choose to use alcohol, be sure it is dry.
  - Gently massage your finger or dangle your hand at your side for a minute.
  - Prick the side or tip of your finger. If using a lancing device, make sure it is firmly on the skin surface before you push the release button.
  - Milk or massage the finger gently to form a large drop.
  - Apply the drop to the test strip, without smearing your finger on the strip.
  - **Throw away the lancet in a safe manner. Ask your nurse or doctor about details on this.**
- 2. Record all your results**, either in a blood glucose diary or a small notebook. Writing down your results (date and time too) lets you track your progress. Take your records to all of your doctor appointments and share these results with them.

### 3. **Is your meter accurate?**

Sometimes you may get a test result you weren't expecting, and you may question the meter's accuracy. There are steps to take to keep the meter in good working order. These can be found in your owner's manual, or by calling the toll free telephone number on the back of the meter. In general:

- Keep the meter clean.
- Keep the meter and strips at room temperature and away from moisture. Do not store the meter in the kitchen or bathroom, or on a window sill or radiator.
- Perform the test carefully, using a good blood drop.
- Keep the lid to your strips bottle tightly closed between uses.
- Code your meter each time you open a new bottle of strips.
- Make sure your supplies are not expired.
- **Quality Control Testing** - This testing involves using a solution with a known level of glucose on a test strip with your meter. This lets you see how well your meter is working. Each meter comes with instructions on how to do this test. Quality control should be done any time you open a new bottle of strips, drop the meter, change batteries, or when you question the results you are getting.

**Check your control solutions carefully.** Most expire 60-90 days after they are opened for the first time. Comparing results on 2 different meters is **not** the way to check accuracy.