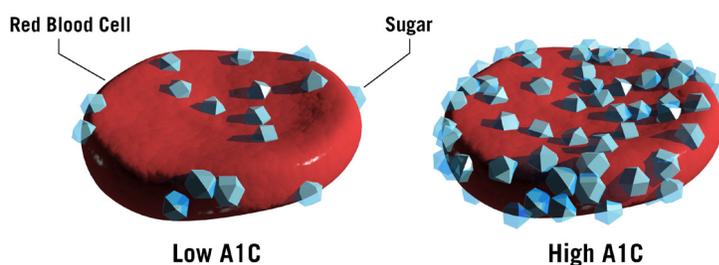


Frequently Asked Questions

People with diabetes need to test their A1C levels often. What is an A1C test? Why does it matter for my health? Here are the answers to these and other frequently asked questions about A1C.

What Is an A1C Test?

An A1C test is a simple blood test that measures the amount of sugar stuck to the red blood cells (RBCs) in your body. RBCs stay in your body for 2-3 months. By measuring the amount of sugar stuck to your RBCs, the A1C test shows us how much sugar was in your blood over the A1C test shows how much sugar has been in your blood during the last 2-3 months.

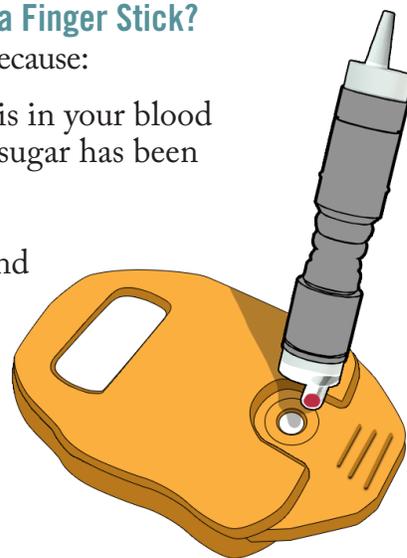


How Is An A1C Test Different Than the Blood Tests I Do at Home with a Finger Stick?

An A1C is different than the daily blood sugar tests you do at home because:

- The daily test you do at home shows you how much sugar is in your blood at that moment. The A1C shows an average of how much sugar has been in your blood over a longer period of time (2-3 months).

For example: Going to a birthday party and eating pizza and birthday cake once, will affect the results of your daily test. This won't change your A1C results though, because this was a one-time event and you don't usually have that much sugar in your blood.



How Do I Prepare for My A1C Test?

You just show up. You don't have to fast (go without food) for this blood test. Many offices have point-of-care machines, meaning that you can do the A1C test and get results right at your doctor's office. Other offices might send you to a lab to get your A1C test.

What Is My Target A1C Range?

Talk with your doctor about what your personal target A1C range should be. The American Diabetes Association says that an A1C of **7% or less** is a good target for most people.

This might be a good target for you too. Your doctor might pick a different target for you, depending on your age and other health conditions you might have.

Why Is It Important to Reach My Target A1C Level?

When you reach your target A1C level, your diabetes is “controlled”. Reaching your target A1C is important. It can tell you and your health care team if your current diabetes treatment plan is working, or if the plan needs to be changed.

Staying at your target A1C can lower the chances of developing other health problems that can be caused by diabetes, (like eye or kidney disease).

How Can I Reach My Target A1C?

Your care team will help you get your A1C in target range or keep your A1C in target range. Also, here are some things that you can do at home:



Eat healthy foods.



Get lots of physical activity.



Take your medicines as prescribed and instructed by your doctor. If for some reason you cannot or do not want to take your medicine, talk to your doctor right away.



Test your blood sugars every day and keep a log.



Lower your stress.

For more information visit:

www.mainehealth.org/diabetes

or contact:

chronicdiseaseadmin@mainehealth.org