

When should I test more often?

Generally, there is no benefit from testing any more frequently than you have been advised. However, you may need to test more often if:

- You are unwell
- Your medication has been recently changed
- If you have uncontrolled high blood sugars after meals
- If you are started on steroid therapy
- You are pregnant or if you are planning a pregnancy
- Your physical activity levels or meal routine and intake change
- You are fed through a tube that is implanted directly into your stomach called a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG)

Blood glucose monitoring equipment

When starting self-monitoring, changing meters or equipment your doctor or nurse will help you identify what equipment is right for you. They will show you how to use it correctly. This includes maintenance and regular checking of the meter as well as disposal of needles, lancets etc.

Driving

If you drive and have diabetes, the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has issued information on when you need to inform them. Up to date information can be found on the DVLA website:

<https://www.gov.uk/diabetes-driving> or telephone: 0300 790 6806

Blood glucose self-monitoring



Information for people with type 2 diabetes

How is diabetes control assessed?

In diabetes there is too much of a sugar called glucose in the blood. This can also appear in the urine.

There are 3 ways to measure the glucose level:

- HbA1c test – by a blood sample taken from the vein by a healthcare professional
- Self-monitoring of blood glucose using a finger-prick test
- Urine testing – not routinely recommended as it is not specific enough

Measuring blood glucose is just one way of taking control of your diabetes. You can find out about other ways during your structured education programme and from your doctor or nurse.

What is the HbA1c test?

The HbA1c test measures the amount of glucose being carried by the red blood cells in the body and indicates a person's blood glucose levels for the previous 2-3 months. This is the preferred test for your doctor or nurse to assess how well your diabetes is controlled. The test should be carried out as part of your regular check-up once or twice a year, although some people need to have it done more often.

What about testing my own blood?

Finger-prick blood tests using your blood glucose meter show what your blood glucose levels are at that moment. The need for monitoring and recording your own blood glucose levels (self-monitoring) should be discussed with your doctor or nurse as part of your structured education programme e.g. DESMOND (Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed).

If you need to monitor your blood glucose at home, you will be shown how to check and interpret your blood glucose and how to use the results. Not all patients will need to test their blood. Your doctor or nurse will advise you if, when and how often you should be testing.

IMPORTANT

Routine self-monitoring of blood glucose is not recommended for the majority of patients with type 2 diabetes who are not on insulin.

Where testing is required as part of your management plan, your doctor or nurse will be able to advise you on the best times of the day to test your glucose level and what action to take if it is too high or too low.

Who should monitor their blood glucose level? ✓

Self-monitoring is **essential** for you if you:

- use insulin to control your diabetes or
- drive buses, lorries **and** take glicazide, glibenclamide, glimepiride, glipizide, tolbutamide, nateglinide or repaglinide

Self-monitoring may be recommended for you if you:

- drive a van, car or motorcycle, or operate machinery **and** take glicazide, glibenclamide, glimepiride, glipizide, nateglinide or repaglinide. For those who drive or operate machinery for a living, testing is more likely to be recommended.
- frequently suffer from symptoms of a low blood glucose levels

If there have been changes in lifestyle, medication or illness, your doctor or nurse may advise you to test your blood glucose levels, and how long you will need to test for.

Who does **NOT** need to monitor blood glucose levels? ✗

You **do not** usually need to monitor your blood glucose levels if:

- your diabetes is controlled by diet and exercise alone
- your diabetes is controlled using metformin alone or in combination with a medicine called albiglutide, alogliptin, canagliflozin, dapagliflozin, dulaglutide, empagliflozin, exenatide linagliptin, liraglutide, lixisenatide, pioglitazone, saxagliptin, sitagliptin or vildagliptin.

When and how often should I test blood glucose levels?

If your diabetes is being managed with tablets and you are asked to monitor your blood glucose by your doctor or nurse. Usually you should test no more than 2-3 times per week. The test should be at different times of the day.

You will need approximately 50 test strips (1 box) every 4-6 months to do this. If you need to test your blood glucose more frequently, for example if you are on insulin or if you are ill, you will need more test strips.

If you are prescribed insulin for your diabetes, your doctor or nurse will advise you on how often you should test your blood glucose, depending on the type of insulin you are on.

If you are ill, information about how frequently to test your blood glucose can be found in the leaflet "[What to do when you are ill](#)", which is available on the TREND-UK understanding diabetes website.