

The ABCs of Diabetes Management



A1C, also known as hemoglobin A1C, is a measure of your average blood sugar over 2-3 months.

This test is conducted by your doctor and tells you how much sugar is attached to the outside of your red blood cells. The higher this number, the greater the risk of diabetes-related complications. These complications include heart, kidney, and eye diseases. Reducing A1C by just one percent (from 8% to 7%) reduces the risk of eye, kidney, and nerve damage by 35 percent (1,3).

A1C Average Plasma Blood Glucose

5%	100	} in control
6%	135	
7%	170	
8%	205	} out of control
9%	240	
10%	275	
11%	310	
12%	345	



Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls.

Blood pressure is recorded in two numbers: the top number (systolic pressure) is the force of blood as the heart beats. The bottom number (diastolic pressure) is the force of blood between the heart beats. When these numbers are high, the heart is working harder than it should. Persons who have diabetes should keep blood pressure below 140/80.

Blood Pressure Classifications:

	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal	< 120	< 80
Prehypertensive	120-139	80-89
Hypertensive	140 +	90 +



Cholesterol levels are indicators of heart health.

High levels of LDL (aka "bad") cholesterol can clog and block arteries, and low levels of HDL ("good") cholesterol can inhibit the removal of LDL cholesterol. Check your cholesterol at least once per year.

Keep your ABCs in check:

Target A1C level:	Less than 7% ₂
Target blood pressure:	Below 140/80 ₄
Target LDL level:	Below 100 ₅

- Lose 5 -10% of your body weight. Be sure to consult with your doctor and approach the weight loss gradually.
- Eat more whole grains, fruits, & veggies.
- Limit or avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, and white flour.
- Gradually increase the amount of physical activity that you do each day until you reach 30-60 minutes of continuous activity. Exercise can help decrease insulin resistance.
- Manage stress by identifying home, work, or social stressors and talking with someone about them.
- Test your blood glucose regularly and log daily highs and lows.
- According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, you should eat no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. Most sodium comes from packaged foods and restaurant meals.

References:

1. Diabetes Care. 1987;10:1-19.
2. American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.
3. Lancet 1998;352:837-53.
4. www.diabetes.org
5. www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/atp3xsum.pdf