



OF WELLNESS KNOW YOUR A1c



WHY IS TESTING MY BLOOD SUGAR AN IMPORTANT PART OF WELLNESS PLANNING?

Whether you have been diagnosed with diabetes or not, knowing your blood sugar numbers is important for your health. Too much or too little sugar in your blood can be damaging to your body. Two different tests are used to measure your blood sugar: a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test and a finger-stick test.

WHAT IS HbA1c?

Hemoglobin is the part of a blood cell that carries oxygen to your body. HbA1c is a component of hemoglobin that forms when sugar is in your bloodstream. Testing your HbA1c will explain how much sugar has been in your blood over the past 3 months. This measure provides your healthcare team with valuable information about how your body stores and uses sugar.

WHAT IS THE HbA1c TEST?

The HbA1c test is done by your doctor and tells how much sugar has been in your blood over the past 3 months. Your doctor does the test by taking a small sample of your blood and sending it to a lab.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE THE HbA1c TEST?

The HbA1c test is the best way for your doctor to tell whether your blood sugar is under control. The test shows whether your blood sugar level is normal or too high.

WHAT IS A GOOD HbA1c SCORE?

A good HbA1c score is less than 7 percent. At this level, your treatment plan is probably working and it is likely that your blood sugar is under control.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE HbA1c SCORE IS HIGH?

A high HbA1c score (greater than 7 percent) means that you have a greater chance for eye disease, kidney disease, or nerve damage. Your treatment plan needs to change. You and your doctor should work together to develop a treatment plan that reduces your risk.

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED THE HbA1c TEST?

Ask your doctor for the HbA1c test at least once a year if you have not been diagnosed with diabetes or two times a year if you have diabetes. Get the test more often if your blood sugar stays too high or if your doctor makes any changes in your treatment plan.

WHAT IS THE FINGER-STICK TEST?

The finger-stick test involves pricking your finger, putting a drop of blood on test strip paper, and placing the strip into a blood glucose meter. Unlike the HbA1c test, which measures glucose control over time, the finger-stick test measures your blood sugar level at the time of the test. Only people who are diagnosed with diabetes or who have been instructed by their doctor should test their blood using the finger-stick test.