



Lesson 2: In Check with Your Diabetes

Getting Started

1. Review lesson plan and activity before each session.
2. Copy handout and follow-up questions.
3. Gather supplies.

Supplies Needed

1. Materials needed: one piece of poster board, magic marker, six (4" x 6") index cards, tape, and a method or way to prop up the poster board while you are speaking.
2. Prepare your activity tools: Title the top of a poster board "Ralph's Roller Coaster Blood Sugar Values." Then divide it in two columns and at the top of one column, write "In Target" and on top of the other column, write "Out of Target".
3. On your (6) index cards, write the following:

Front: "BLOOD SUGAR - 200 before lunch"	BACK: "Out of Target"
Front: "BLOOD SUGAR- 190 after lunch"	BACK: "In Target Range" (close enough to 180)
Front: "BLOOD SUGAR- 298 at bedtime"	BACK: "Out of Target"
Front: "BLOOD SUGAR- 130 at bedtime"	BACK: "In Target "
Front: "BLOOD SUGAR- 357 after dinner"	BACK: "Out of Target"
Front: "BLOOD SUGAR- 110 before breakfast"	BACK: "In Target"

OR

For the activity, you can call out the blood sugar values and have your audience respond in a "Q & A" style whether the blood sugars are "in target range" or "out of target range."

Beginning the Session

1. Introduce yourself by name and the organization that you represent.
2. Summarize the lesson by going over the objectives. Let the group know that the session will be informal and that questions can be asked at any time.

Objectives

The participants will:

1. Verbalize the appropriate blood sugar ranges.
2. Identify the importance of checking their blood sugar once a day.
3. Understand the importance of getting an A1c test twice a year.
4. Know that there is a blood sugar meter to meet their personal taste and needs.



Script

It is important for you to keep your blood sugar in the proper range each day.

Does everyone know the proper blood sugar range after a meal? Gather and discuss responses.

-Participants can follow along with their corresponding handout

What are My Blood Sugar Goals?

Two hours after meals: Less than 180 mg/dl

Before meals: 90-130 mg /dl

Talk to your doctor about the best blood sugar goals and testing schedule for you.

What is My A1c Goal?

Many doctors recommend testing A1c twice a year and it should be 6.5% or less.

Ask your doctor what is best for you.

How often should you test your blood sugar? You should test your blood sugar two hours after eating each meal. Testing at this time will give you an understanding of how your meals and medicine affect your diabetes. This is not always realistic for everyone. Many older adults, especially those with a history of heart disease and a weakened cardiovascular system, may be at higher risk for passing out (also known as a hypoglycemic episode). This is an actual threat to your health and well being. If you are not willing to check your blood sugar everyday, it is important for you to at least check (or have someone check for you) when you are feeling faint, dizzy, light-headed, or otherwise unwell. This is most important for those of you who have a history of low blood sugar. Your medical team will know more about your individual testing needs, so discuss with them what your blood sugar goals and testing schedule should be.

A note about exercise or prolonged physical activity: If you are using insulin to lower your blood sugars, do not exercise if your blood sugar is over 250 mg/dl and you are spilling ketones. You may need to check your urine if your blood glucose is over 250. A urine test will tell you if you have ketones in your urine. Your body makes ketones when there isn't enough insulin in your



blood. Ketones can make you very sick. Call your doctor right away if you find ketones when you do a urine test. You may have a serious condition that can cause death if not treated. Signs of ketones are vomiting, weakness, fast breathing, and a sweet smell on the breath. Having ketones is more likely to develop in people with type 1 diabetes. You can buy strips for testing ketones at a drug store. Your doctor or diabetes educator will show you how to use them.

With many people with type 2 diabetes, having a blood sugar over 250 mg/dl may be caused by not drinking enough water. Drink at least 16 ounces of water, and check your blood sugar in 30 minutes if you get a blood sugar reading over 250 mg/dl. If blood sugar is below 250 mg/dl, and you are not using insulin to control your blood sugar, you may safely exercise.

Why should you test your blood sugar? Self-testing helps you see how food, exercise, and your diabetes medicine affect your blood sugar. The readings that you get from these tests help you manage your diabetes. You already know that controlling your blood sugar can greatly lower your chances of complications to your health, such as:

1. Blurred vision, even blindness
2. Kidney failure
3. Surgical removal of a foot or leg
4. Heart attack or stroke
5. Fainting due to low blood sugar

Also, you will feel your best when your blood sugar is in the right range! But you cannot be sure of your blood sugar level just by the way you feel. The only way to know for sure is to monitor.

Remember, when you have diabetes, you must work to do what your body once did for itself.

Have any of you ever had the A1c test? Does anyone know what the A1c test tells you? Gather and discuss responses. An A1c test shows what your blood sugar control has been over the past three months. This test gives you, as well as your health care team, a clearer picture of how well you are managing your diabetes. Most people need to get A1c checked twice a year (up to 6 months), but your doctor may recommend this test 1-4 times a year (up to 3 months). The A1c test value ideally should be less than *6.5%, but any reduction in this number is good. A 1% decrease



in A1c can lower your risk of certain complications (such as diabetic retinopathy) by 35%! Once you have done this test, it will give you the “big picture” of how you are controlling your diabetes. When you check your blood sugar each day, you will get a “snapshot” of how you are managing your diabetes at that very moment. Also, by looking at your daily blood sugar pattern, you will know if you need to talk to your health care provider about your insulin, medicine, activity, or meal plan.

Blood Sugar monitoring devices

Note to the speaker: Many participants may feel more comfortable with the term “blood sugar” so you may want to refer to the blood glucose monitors as “blood sugar monitors” or explain that blood glucose and blood sugar mean the same thing.

Many people with diabetes feel that one drawback to checking their blood sugar on a regular basis is that their fingertips become sore. Good news: there are now blood sugar monitors available that you can use in areas such as your forearm, thighs, lower leg, and your abdomen. These areas are not considered to be as sensitive to pricking as fingertips. You can use these other places when checking your first morning blood sugar, but always use your fingers when checking after a meal or if you feel your blood sugar is dropping.

Some monitors have other nice features. There are certain monitors that require a small amount of blood and “beep” when it has enough blood to determine your results. Medicare covers blood sugar testing supplies including monitors and a certain number of lancets and strips each month. By having your own monitor, you can stay on top of your diabetes management and get on the path to feeling your best!

If you think you are interested in owning your own blood sugar monitor (or want a new one), and would like help in selecting one, let us know. I can get information on different blood sugar monitors; then you and your medical team can decide which one is best for you.

Note to the speaker: Listed on page six is contact information for any of your participants who would like your help in selecting a blood sugar monitor.



Ask your audience the following questions:

1. *Would any of you leave an unattended pot of boiling water on the stove?*
2. *Would any of you intentionally leave your door unlocked at night?*
3. *Would any of you leave money or your valuables out on the front lawn for just anybody to steal?*

Gather and discuss responses.

It sounds like you are responsible people. It also takes responsibility to check your blood sugar each day. You all are much too smart not to take care of your body the way you take care of your house and valuables. Keep in mind that monitoring your blood sugar can play a big part in preventing the long-term complications of diabetes.

** Note to the speaker: The American College of Endocrinology recommends an A1c level of 6.5% or less for those with diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends an A1c level of 7% or less for those with diabetes.*



References

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Contact information for questions regarding blood sugar monitors:
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Activities

“Ralph’s Roller Coaster Blood Sugar Values”

Now turn your poster board over to the side that says “In Target” and “Out of Target.” This activity follows a blood sugar diary of our friend Ralph. Pass out the index cards you made with different blood sugar values written on the front side. You will then ask each participant if the blood sugar value they have should go in the “In Target” or “Out of Target” column. Then take the index card from the person and tape it in the appropriate column. If both you and your participant are uncertain of the answer, you may flip the card to the backside and see the answer.

- On your (6) index cards, write the following:

Front: “BLOOD SUGAR - 200 before lunch”	BACK: “Out of Target Range”
Front: “BLOOD SUGAR- 190 after lunch”	BACK: “In Target Range” (close enough to 180)
Front: “BLOOD SUGAR- 298 at bedtime”	BACK: “Out of Target Range”
Front: “BLOOD SUGAR- 130 at bedtime”	BACK: “In Target Range”
Front: “BLOOD SUGAR- 357 after dinner”	BACK: “Out of Target Range”
Front: “BLOOD SUGAR- 110 before breakfast”	BACK: “In Target Range”

Your participants may have questions about blood sugar ranges differing throughout the day. As a general rule, blood sugar values will be the lowest in the morning before eating. However, some people (who are on insulin) have a high blood sugar value in the morning even though it has been many hours since they have eaten. Your fasting blood sugar (or before breakfast reading) gives you an idea of what happened the night before. Some causes of high fasting readings include:

1. Eating too much
2. Stress or poor night’ sleep
3. Being sick
4. Too little medicine

You can expect blood sugar levels to be slightly higher up to two hours after eating. This is true for everyone, not just those with diabetes. It is important to remember your blood sugar will



change throughout the day just like a roller coaster, so it is important to look at your A1c at least twice a year.

OR Option #2

For a simpler version of this activity, the leader may call out the blood sugar values and get their audience responses.

“Monitor Talk”

This activity is designed to be a one-on-one with participants who have questions or concerns about their self-monitoring blood sugar devices. On the day you give this lesson, you may choose to have a local Certified Diabetes Educator, pharmacist, or nurse come in and talk with participants on an individual basis (or as a group) about monitors. Also, a trained staff member may assist the participant in checking his/her blood sugar if possible and/or appropriate.

The Diabetes Alphabet

Today we talked about getting your A1c tested. We will talk about the rest of the alphabet messages in the coming sessions. Let’s recite them now. *Note to presenter: you may want to make a poster board with these messages listed for use throughout the series.*

A for A1c Test- Check twice a year

B for Blood Pressure- Check at each doctor’s visit

C for Cholesterol- Check once a year

D for Daily Exercise- Be physically active every day

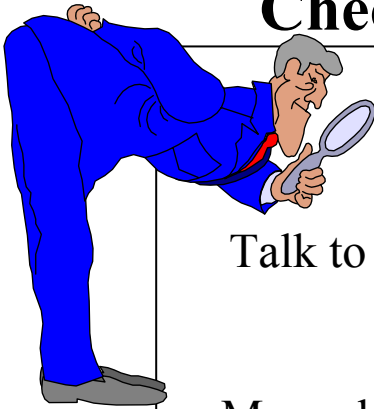
E for Eating Well- Take down portion sizes, stay on your meal schedule

F for Foot Care- Check your feet for sores, blisters, or injuries every day

S for Sugar Testing- Check your blood sugar daily or as recommended by your doctor



Checking Up on Your Diabetes



What are My Blood Sugar Goals?

2 hours after meals: less than 180 mg/dl

Before meals: 90-130 mg/dl

Talk to your doctor about the best blood sugar goals and testing schedule for you.

What is My A1c Goal?

Many doctors recommend testing A1c twice a year and it should be 6.5% or less.

Ask your doctor what is best for you.

Drink at least 16 ounces (2 cups) of water, and check your blood sugar in 30 minutes if you get a blood sugar reading over 250 mg/dl. If blood sugar is below 250 mg/dl, you may safely exercise.

Controlling your blood sugar can greatly lower your chances of serious health problems down the road, such as:

Blurred vision, even blindness

Kidney failure

Loss of foot or leg

Heart attack or stroke

The only way to know your blood sugar is to check it with a monitor! So...check your blood sugar!