

# FINGERSTICK GLUCOSE MONITORING

## “Insider” tips and tricks



In order to maximize the benefits and minimize the downsides associated with glucose monitoring, here are some helpful hints from our expert team of diabetes care and education specialists and experienced people with diabetes:

### 1. GO FOR THE GOALS

Monitoring without goals is like a ship without a rudder, floating aimlessly. Work with your diabetes care team to make your goals meaningful, measurable, and realistic. They should be related to things you have direct control over—such as when/how often you will check, record, and review your glucose levels.

### 2. ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION

Most brand-name blood glucose meters are downloadable to programs that can generate nice, neat reports. But don't stop there. Glucose values by themselves may reveal when we are in and out of range, but they don't reveal why. There is always a context, or story, behind each reading.

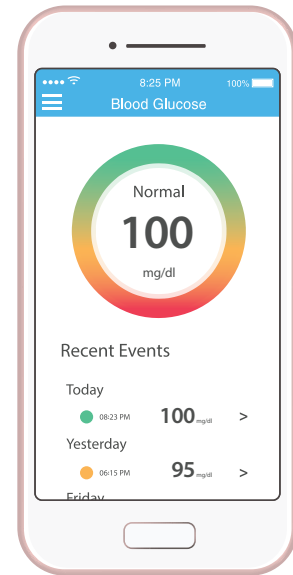
Keeping track of factors that affect your glucose level and entering them into your log or an app can help you and your health care team uncover sources of out-of-range readings.

#### These include:

- Food intake (carbs in particular)
- Doses and timing of insulin and other diabetes medications
- Physical activities (exercise and daily chores)
- Emotional stresses
- Illnesses
- Poor sleep



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## 3. LEARN FROM YOUR DATA

Once you've collected a few weeks' worth of information, it's time to take a critical look. Your diabetes care team can help you to evaluate your data at your appointments, so bring printed reports to your visits or bring ALL of your meters for downloading. Look at your own information on a regular basis as well. Review the glucose values at each time of day separately: before and after breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and at bedtime. If you notice that a number of values are out of your target glucose range, discuss potential solutions with your health care team.

### To make fingerstick glucose monitoring as painless as possible:

- Choose a meter that requires a very small blood sample (0.5 microliters or less, if possible).
- Use the thinnest lancets possible (33-gauge or higher) and change them regularly, single use is recommended.
- Use a lancing device that has an adjustable depth, and set it for the lowest setting that still produces a sufficient blood drop.
- Prick the sides of the fingers rather than the tips.
- Use the 3rd (middle), 4th (ring) and 5th (pinky) fingers on each hand and use a different site each time.

### To ensure an accurate reading:

- Make sure your meter is coded properly (if necessary).
- Clean and dry your finger before checking—soap and water are best.
- Line up the test strip with your blood drop by holding the meter still on a table and sliding the blood sample slowly towards the strip.
- Apply a drop to completely fill the test strip.
- Store your strips at room temperature, in their vial, and don't use them past their expiration date. Exposing test strips to air or humidity makes them inaccurate.