
Self-Monitoring Blood Sugar for Type 2 Patients with Diabetes not on Insulin



Testing blood sugar at home using test strips and a metre is common practice for people with type 2 diabetes.

It can help you:

- See how food and exercise affect your sugar level.
- Understand how well your diabetes treatments are working.
- Guide changes that should be made to your diet, activity level, or other treatment.

But most people with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin don't need to regularly self-test their blood sugar. Here's why:

If you have type 2 diabetes and are not on insulin, self-testing offers little benefit.

New Canadian and international research shows that most people with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin don't need to regularly self-test their blood sugar. This is because self-testing does not improve their blood sugar control or quality of life in a significant way.

So, if you manage your diabetes by diet alone or with medications other than insulin, you can self-test less often without harming your health.

Self-monitoring can be stressful.

Routine self-testing can create stress or anxiety for those who may monitor their blood sugar levels constantly. There are other everyday activities you should focus on to improve overall health. Some examples of these activities can be found on page 2 in the green box.



Are there times when I should test more often?

If you're not using insulin to manage your type 2 diabetes, you don't need to test your blood sugar regularly. There are, however, important times you may want to test more often.

For example:

- You are at risk of having low blood sugar because you take a sulfonylurea drug (for example gliclazide, glyburide, glimepiride, repaglinide).
- Your blood sugar level goes up and down or is hard to control.
- You are sick with an infection, like the flu.
- You are pregnant or trying to get pregnant
- Low blood sugar is a safety hazard at your job.

In these types of situations, be sure to talk to your health care provider about when and how often you should be testing your blood sugar.

Testing for a Reason

When you do self-test your blood sugar, make sure to take action based on the result. In other words, test for a reason! Talk with your health care provider to decide what to do if your blood sugar is too high or too low.

About Choosing Wisely Canada

Choosing Wisely Canada is the national voice for reducing unnecessary tests and treatments in health care. One of its important functions is to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations that lead to smart and effective care choices.

How this pamphlet was created:

This pamphlet was adapted from CADTH's patient tool *Testing for a Reason*. Reviewers of this pamphlet included Dr. Kimberly Wintemute and Dr. Guylène Thériault, Choosing Wisely Canada's Primary Care Co-Leads and Aimee Press, Patient Reviewer.

This pamphlet is for you to use when talking with your health care provider. It is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment. Use of this pamphlet is at your own risk.

What Else Can I Do?

Here are some activities you can do to stay healthy and prevent complications:

- Eat healthy meals and avoid junk food. Consider preparing your meals instead of buying pre-packaged food or take out.
- Be active: Walking regularly is a good start.
- Take all of your medications according to your health care provider's instructions.
- Make sure your blood pressure and cholesterol levels are in a healthy range.
- Go for regular eye checkups.
- Regularly check your feet for any sores.
- Manage your stress.
- See your health care providers regularly and talk about your A1C results.