

Diabetes Management

What is an A1c and what does it measure?

An A1c is a measurement your physician takes approximately every 3 months to see how effective your current treatment for diabetes is. The measurement is an average of your blood sugar levels in the past 3 months and is shown as a percentage. The general goal for a patient's A1c is to have it less than 7%, however this may be adjusted based on the individual's progression of their diabetes as well as any other disease states they may have.

What are "lows" in diabetes? What signs and symptoms should I look for?

A "low" is when a person's blood sugars get too low to allow normal function to occur. Some signs and symptoms of lows are:

- *shaking
- *nervousness/anxiety
- *sweating
- *chills
- *confusion
- *feeling lightheaded
- *blurred vision
- *headaches
- *weakness/fatigue

What Is Diabetes?

In people who do not have diabetes, their blood sugars are naturally regulated by insulin release from the pancreas. Insulin is a natural hormone that helps move blood sugars into the cells in which they are needed. People who have diabetes have a problem in which this process is interrupted and cannot occur normally. Diabetes is divided into two types: diabetes type 1 and diabetes type 2. In diabetes type 1, the pancreas gradually loses the ability to produce the insulin that is required to move blood sugars into cells. In diabetes type 2, the pancreas can produce insulin, but either cannot produce enough of it or can't use it efficiently.

How can I effectively manage my diabetes?

- *Aerobic exercise 50 minutes at least 3 days of the week
- *Weight, or resistance training at least 2 days of the week
- *Monitor current blood sugars by testing sugars on a regular basis
- *Prevent "lows" by counting how many carbs you consume and, if a "low" occurs, keeping sources of sugar on hand such as glucose tablets, jelly packets, or life saver's hard candies
- *Ensure your blood pressure and cholesterol levels are well controlled by following up with your physician and taking daily measurements of your blood pressure
- *Visit your primary care physician yearly to monitor the progression of your diabetes and any complications that may occur
- *Take your medications as prescribed to manage progression and current control of your diabetes

Managing Your Diabetes May Prevent the Following:

*Seizures from having a "low"

*Pain or numbness in your feet

*Eye problems such as glaucoma or cataracts

*Increased risk of stroke

*Increased risk of kidney disease