

Why Do I Need to Check My Blood Sugars Daily? Control is our Goal!

by Susan J. SMith, Ph.D, CDE

Keeping track of blood sugars is not only important for your health care team but also for you as a patient. Blood sugars can fluctuate without you knowing. So, if we aren't checking them daily, how do we know if our diabetes is progressing faster than normal?

Controlling daily blood sugars isn't as easy as it may seem. Blood sugars are affected by medications, dietary input, physical activity, illness, pain, traveling, stress, and day to day living. We are never 100 percent in control of all these activities. However, they are part of life that changes minute by minute. We need to keep juggling all these aspects and keeping them in balance by constantly paying some attention to each of these areas.

What do we learn from daily blood sugars? Your health professionals can determine if your treatment plan is the best and most efficient for you. That is important as everyone is different and diabetes affects each differently. Diabetes specialists know which medications may be more effective for which patients, but it is usually guided by what the daily blood sugars are.

There is a lot that patients can learn from their daily blood sugars. Many patients stop checking their blood sugars because their numbers are too high and they get frustrated. That is understandable, but instead of ignoring those numbers, call your health professional and make an appointment to discuss what can be done to encourage better glycemic control.

Checking the morning blood sugars can help us understand how active your liver is in overnight production of sugar to fuel the body. The most important blood sugar for patients to check is 2 hours after the beginning of one meal. Our goal for good control is <140 mg/dl. This can tell us how the food we ate at the previous meal is being handled by the body, how active the pancreas is in producing insulin, and if we ate something (regular soda, fruit juice, ice cream, large portions) that influenced the upward trend of the blood sugar.

Always take the log of your blood sugars to all health professional visits. Discuss the numbers with the professional to make decisions as to what to do differently to improve your numbers. Remember Control is the Goal!

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