

Penn State
Institute for Diabetes & Obesity

GLYCOHEMOGLOBIN A₁C

(3 month blood sugar test A₁C)

One goal of treating diabetes is to keep blood sugar levels in control. When you test your blood sugar, it tells you your blood sugar value at that very time. Blood sugars change from hour to hour, that is why a 3 month blood sugar test is the best way to see how blood sugar levels have been over time.

Here Are Some Facts

- Sugar is "sticky." It sticks to proteins in the body. This is one of the ways that diabetes can cause long-term health problems.
- The A1C test will tell what the blood sugar levels have been for the past 3 months.
- It's OK to eat before this test is done.
- This test should be done every 6 months if blood sugars are in control. If blood sugars are not in control this test should be done every 3 months.
- Ask your healthcare provider what your goal is for blood sugar control.

Here's What You Can Do

- Discuss the A₁C test with your healthcare provider or diabetes educator. Discuss how often it should be done, and what your A₁C goal is.
- Know your goal range: ____% to ____%.
- Keep track of your A₁C tests. Because this test is done regularly, it shows whether your diabetes control is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same.

A decrease of 1% in your A₁C test...

decreases your risk of complications by 35%.

