

About A1c

for Type 1 Diabetes

What is a hemoglobin A1c?

Hemoglobin A1c (also known as A1c or HbA1c), measures your average blood glucose (BG) for the past 3 months. It's a blood test done in the doctor's office.

Why is the number so important to people with diabetes?

This is a separate number from your glucometer readings. This test measures the amount of sugar that attaches to hemoglobin. It stays attached for the life cycle of a red blood cell which is about 3 months. It is important because it reflects how your blood sugar is staying in balance over the long run.

What does the HbA1c number mean?

It's measured as a percent. The percent (%) number corresponds with your BG number (see table at right). You want to be in the green zone. Yellow zone numbers are a warning. If you are in the red zone your care team will tell you how to take action to bring it down.

***An HbA1c goal of less than 7% is recommended for all children under age 18.**

HbA1c %	Average BG (blood glucose) glucometer readings measured in milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dl)	
5%	97	GREEN (in recommended range)
6%	120	
7%*	150	
8%	180	YELLOW (above range - consider changes)
9%	210	
10%	240	RED (above range - changes needed)
11%	270	
12%	300	
13%	330	
14% and above	360 and above	

How can I lower my HbA1c?

It takes about 3 months to see a change in your A1c number. Practice these daily habits to stay in better control:

- Check blood glucose 4 to 5 times per day.
- Take insulin as prescribed.
- Follow the meal plan given by your diabetes dietitian.

Use these as a guide for dosing your insulin before meals:

- 10 minutes** before eating if BG is in the **100s**
- 20 minutes** before eating if BG is in the **200s**
- 30 minutes** before eating if BG is in the **300s**
- 40 minutes** before eating if BG is in the **400s**

To Learn More

- Endocrinology
206-987-2640
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org/patient-education

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Seattle Children's offers free interpreter services for patients, family members and legal representatives who are deaf or hard of hearing or speak a language other than English. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201. This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your healthcare provider.

© 2024 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington. All rights reserved.