

Essential advice for people  
with diabetes from Accu-Chek



# What do you know about HbA1c



# What is the

The HbA1c test is a type of blood test for people with diabetes. It measures your average blood glucose level over 2-3 months and plays an important role in managing your diabetes.

The HbA1c test is done by your doctor or nurse and helps to show how well your blood glucose levels are being controlled over the last few months.



**HbA1c**

# HbA1c test?

**This booklet explains HbA1c and how you can use your test results to make sure you stay in control of your diabetes in the long-term.**



# What is

**HbA1c is a measurement that shows the amount of glucose that is being carried around by your red blood cells. Glucose naturally binds itself to the specific part of your red blood cells called haemoglobin.**



Red blood cells survive in your body for around 2-3 months, so when your HbA1c test is done, it reflects your average blood glucose levels over that time. This provides a longer-term indication of your blood glucose control than your finger-prick tests.

For example, if your blood glucose levels have been high in recent weeks, your HbA1c result will also be raised.

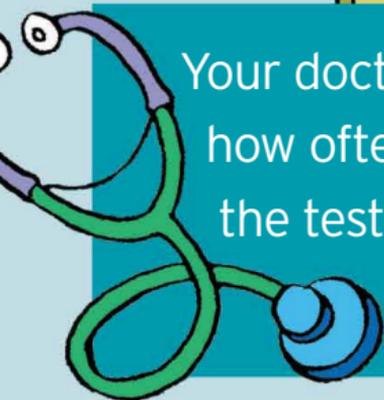
# HbA1c?

To perform the HbA1c test, your doctor or diabetes nurse will take a small sample of blood from a vein. You will get the results after a few days.

The results from your test give a good idea of whether your blood glucose levels have been within your target range over the last 2-3 months.



Your doctor or nurse will tell you how often you need to have the test done, but most people are tested twice a year.



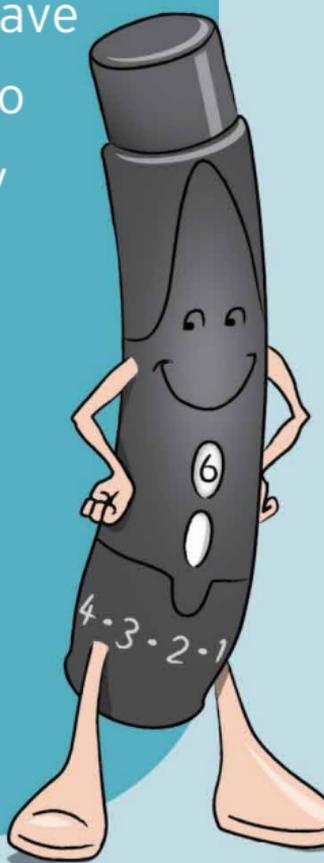
# Keep testi

## **HbA1c is different to your finger-pricker test**

While the HbA1c test shows your average blood glucose level over several months, your finger-pricker test tells you how much glucose is in your blood right now.

It is important to keep checking your blood glucose levels regularly (if you have been advised to do so) to keep you feeling healthy and to avoid hypos.

Testing your own blood glucose level is the best way of keeping track of your diabetes on a day-to-day basis.



# ng yourself

By using the results from both home testing and your HbA1c test, you and your healthcare team will be able to make sure that your medicine, diet and exercise are all working hard to help you stay in control of your blood glucose levels.



# Why HbA1c i

Research has shown that people who manage to reduce their HbA1c and keep it low, can delay or prevent some of the long-term health problems related to diabetes.



# s important

Lowering your HbA1c reduces your chance of having the following health problems that can be caused by poorly controlled blood glucose:

- Foot problems e.g. ulcers
- Heart and circulation problems
- Eye problems
- Kidney problems
- Nerve damage
- Infection
- Impotence



## **The unit of the HbA1c test result has changed!**

This is done to create a standard measure that is the same around the world.

The HbA1c will still measure the amount of glucose that is attached to your haemoglobin molecules. **It will now be reported in millimoles per mole (mmol/mol) instead of percentage (%).**

# our goal

## Your results

In the past, the results of HbA1c tests were measured as a percentage (%). You will have been given an individual target by your healthcare professional.

NICE guidelines 2015 recommend a target level of 48 mmol/mol for most people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

However, your healthcare team are there to help you choose a **personal HbA1c target** to aim towards.



# Converters

The following chart will allow you to convert between the old and the new HbA1c test results.

The numbers in the new HbA1c test results will be larger than you are used to. This does not mean that your HbA1c is high. An HbA1c test result of 5.5% will now be reported as 37 mmol/mol. Both results show that your blood glucose levels are well-controlled.

If you have problems understanding your new HbA1c results, your doctor or nurse should be able to help you.



# Conversion chart

Old % HbA1c	New mmol/mol HbA1c
5	31
5.5	37
6	42
6.5	48
7	53
7.5	59
8	64
8.5	69
9	75
9.5	80
10	86
10.5	91
11	97
11.5	102
12	108

Speak to your healthcare team to determine your personal target, and then aim to achieve it!

There are lots of reasons why your HbA1c can be above 48 mmol/mol. Sometimes your healthcare team may recommend that your personal target is higher than 48mmol/mol, and your treatment and lifestyle could play a part too.

Other factors that can lead to high blood glucose levels:

- Being overweight
- Lack of exercise
- Inadequate medication
- Infection or illness
- Stress

# oo high?

The type of diabetes you have can also make a difference to your blood glucose control.



## Type 1 diabetes

Your body needs insulin injections in order to keep your HbA1c level near 48 mmol/mol. The amount of insulin you need to do this may change over time.

## Type 2 diabetes

Over time, your body may produce less insulin and become less able to keep your HbA1c level steady. Your doctor may adjust your medicine to help you control your blood glucose levels.

# Set your sight

Your doctor may recommend new medicine, or changes to your current medicine, to help you reach your HbA1c target.



Lots of people have an HbA1c value over 48 mmol/mol, and getting your HbA1c level within your target range can be challenging, but it is important.

# s on your target

## Get your HbA1c to $<48$ mmol/mol

- Watch your weight
- Follow a recommended meal plan
- Stick with, or refresh, your exercise and activity plan
- Keep taking any medicine your doctor has given you
- Check your own blood glucose levels regularly if you have been advised to do so







# Did you know?



- ✓ **HbA1c is a measure of your average blood glucose level over the last 2-3 months**
- ✓ **Lowering your HbA1c reduces your risk of long-term health problems**
- ✓ **It is important to keep doing your own blood glucose testing if you have been advised to do so.**

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**0800 701000 (UK)\***  
**1 800 709600 (ROI)\***

or log on to

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**[www.accu-chek.ie](http://www.accu-chek.ie)**

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