How to Reduce Pain and Anxiety Related to Diabetes Finger Prick Testing

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Diabetes Finger Prick Testing Tips

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of this particular disease, and it affects the levels of glucose in the body. Insulin is not used properly and that causes blood sugar to rise. Since there is no cure for diabetes, living with it requires one to always be aware of one's sugar levels. Typically, the way to measure blood sugar levels is a diabetes finger prick with a self-monitoring device, which then reads the blood and tells you how much glucose is in the blood. From there, patients can determine the next course of action. Repeated testing can cause pain, discomfort, and/or anxiety for people with diabetes, but following certain steps will help to decrease this.

Clean Hands

It is important to have clean hands before pricking your finger because anything on your hand could contaminate the blood sample and give you inaccurate readings. However, you should not use rubbing alcohol to clean your hands. Rubbing alcohol will thicken the layer of skin surrounding your finger, making the needle stick more painful over time.

Washing your hands with warm water and soap will suffice. Additionally, you should not wipe down the needle with alcohol after use either, because the chemical will break down the structure of the needle.

The Importance of Blood Flow

Typically, people with diabetes mellitus tend to squeeze the blood out of their fingertips or use a needle that goes deeper into the skin to get a suitable blood sample. This, however, is unnecessary if you get the blood flowing before you prick your finger. Simply wash your hands with warm water, and then, let your arm hang down by your side for a minute. This will allow the blood to flow to your finger more easily.

Another method is to massage your finger from base to tip to increase blood flow to the area. This will allow you to get a good blood sample without having to squeeze the blood out of your finger. Using lotion regularly will also help to soften the skin of your finger, making it easier for the lance to go into it. Be sure to wash off the lotion before testing, though.

Experiment and Use Once

There are so many different varieties of type 2 diabetes testing devices and/or lancets out there that you may want to find one that works best for you.

Talk to a diabetes mellitus educator to figure out which is right for you. Often, they receive free samples that you could try before committing to buying one yourself. However, it is important to remember that once you use a

lancet or needle, you cannot use the same one again.

Using a lancet more than once will cause it to dull, which only makes sticking yourself more painful. If you need to use it more than once because it is too expensive, try to limit it to two to four uses maximum.

Location, Location, Location

Picking the spot on your finger that is going to cause the least amount of pain can be tricky. You want to avoid repeated use on the same spot to avoid infection and other problems. Also, don't use just one finger; instead, alternate glucose testing by using all of your fingers.

There are other lance options out there that allow you to test on other locations like your thigh or forearm, but the results will not be as accurate as from your finger. In addition, you want to avoid doing deeper punctures if you can. The deeper a lance goes into your finger, the more nerve endings it touches and the more pain you feel.

Beyond the Sting

While testing your blood sugar is a crucial part of having type 2 diabetes, it does not have to cause a lot of pain or anxiety. Follow these tips to ensure that testing does not cause more pain or anxiety than is necessary.