Diabetes, Blood Sugars and You: Why You Should Be Testing More Often

by REBECCA PACIOREK

Why Is Testing Blood Sugars Important?

I see it in her eyes, and she's about to ask the dreaded question, "Have you been testing your blood sugars on a regular basis?"

See, I know darn well that I am supposed to have an answer for this and I also know that it's been so long I don't remember.

"Um, I haven't tested in a while, but last time it was in the morning and was something like 145." She looks at me knowing that I probably haven't tested in a month and says. "OK. Let's see what it is right now."

I know that I should be testing my blood sugars more often.

My doctor and I even agreed that just three times per week would be sufficient for me, but I just can't seem to make it happen. It's not that it's that painful, though I am afraid of needles, it's just one of those things that sort of falls off my radar. It shouldn't matter though.

Testing Blood Sugars Is Important for Diabetic Health Maintenance

Not only does this give a good basis for you and your doctor to discuss your treatment plan and progress, but it tracks trends.

You might find that you tend to have higher blood sugar levels the day after you splurged at a party. It could be that you are a person that runs higher at night than you do during the day. Maybe working out drops your sugars quickly but they take a while to rebound.

All these things are good to know so that you can keep them in mind when planning your day, your menus and even your medicines. Also, it's great for your doctor to be able to tell whether your numbers are trending in an upward or a downward fashion.

Maybe you're kicking butt working out and following the diet, and your numbers are going down so well that you may be able to go on fewer medicines.

On the flip side, what if you are NOT behaving as well and your numbers are trending upwards? This is important to know too so that you can stop whatever is causing it and make sure to keep everything under control and in balance.

You and your doctor will need to have open communication on what exactly they are looking for in your testing. Be sure to know what points are too high or too low for you and when they want you to call in for advice.

Making the Purchase of Diabetic Testing Supplies

Now that we know why the testing is important, let's tackle purchasing the machine and supplies. Diabetes is big business and there are so many different diabetic supplies out there to choose from.

Here are some suggestions for getting yourself set up:

1. **If your doctor wants you to be testing your blood glucose at home, start off by asking what they suggest you use and ask if they have any in office.** Sometimes the makers will leave machines for doctors to give out.
2. **If that's not the case, make a call to your insurance company to see what they suggest and will pay for.** All insurance companies are different so make sure you know your benefits before shopping.
3. **Ask your pharmacist for advice.** Not only do some of the in-store pharmacies have their own versions of machines and test supplies, but many times these are less expensive than what the insurance even suggests. Also, the pharmacist may also be aware of special deals going on. This leads us to the next tip.
4. **There are a few main names in diabetic testing supplies**. Checking them out on Google may help you dig up some free machine or supply coupons. In addition to free or discounted supplies, they may also have assistance programs based on income like some of the medicines themselves have.

What Are My Diabetic Testing Blood Sugar Options?

Here are a few of the main names to check on:

- One Touch Currently has a free meter offer if you qualify.
- Accu-Chek Also has a free meter available. Also, they have a card to get low-cost test strips.
- Contour Has a free meter of choice available as well as low-cost test strips.
- ReliOn
- FreeStyle Not only did FreeStyle offer a free meter and reduced test strips, they even have an offer for free batteries right now.

There's An App for Testing Blood Sugars

Your doctor has probably given you a little brochure or flyer that talks about tracking your testing results and writing them down to take with you for your next doctor's visit. And, you probably put it in that pile of "stuff I'll get to in the next 30 years" as I did.

The testing machines listed above all have some pretty nice websites with a lot of useful information regarding diabetes. They also have various tracking suggestions. One of the things that I personally like was that some machines even offer the availability to have an app for tracking your results.

Taking it a step further, OneTouch has test meters that will download information to your phone using Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

Contour has an interesting meter that is a USB and connects directly to the computer to download information.

The great thing is that both Android and Apple have free (or paid) apps available that can also help in tracking your test results as well as your diet and exercise. If you can take the time (or train yourself) to track all of those things, that will help your doctor the most in being able to work with you on your progress.

Diabetes, Testing Blood Sugars, and Me

I did find something pretty exciting in this research that I am now waiting to get in the mail. Dario!

This little guy looks fun to me. This meter seems to be about the size of a thumb drive and attaches to your smartphone. You flip the top for a test strip and pop on the lancet and prick your finger.

It then analyzes your blood and transmits the information directly to your smartphone, so you don’t even have to think about logging anything. Also, the app also has a carb and exercise counting abilities and even the ability to have an emergency alert if needed.

I like tech stuff and new apps, so if I can keep my doctor happy and get to play with something new, I’m certainly more likely to track.

So, in the meantime, take some of our advice above and work with your doctor on a plan to make glucose testing work for YOU.