

How to Lower Hemoglobin A1c Count

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If you're one of 23.6 million Americans with diabetes, you may struggle with blood glucose counts. One of the best ways to insure that your blood glucose levels are within the normal range is to have a hemoglobin A1c test (HbA1c). The HbA1c measures your average blood glucose concentration over the average lifespan of the red blood cells in your body, which is about 120 days.

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Clinical blood test ordered by your physician
- Exercise clothing and shoes
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Medications (optional)

- 1 Ask for a comprehensive cardiac blood profile test, if you suspect that you may have diabetes. This should consist of two tests: a fasting glucose tolerance test and a hemoglobin A1c test. While both measure blood glucose, the former looks at current glucose levels, while the latter looks at several months worth of glucose levels. The latter is also a better indicator of how well your diabetes is being managed overall.
- 2 Review the results of your fasting blood glucose test. This test measures the average level of your blood sugar, which should be between 70 to 110 mg/dl. Blood glucose levels between 110-126 mg/dl indicate possible impaired fasting glucose. If levels are elevated beyond 140 following a glucose tolerance test, you have impaired glucose tolerance. If glucose levels are higher than 200 mg/dl, then a diabetes diagnosis is generally rendered.
- 3 Ask your doctor to include a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test. This measures your average blood glucose concentration over the past 120 days, or the lifespan of your red blood cells. It's not always considered part of a standard screening panel, so inquire whether or not your insurance will allow it as well as cover it. Often times, stress, illness, eating or [exercise](#) will cause inaccurate fasting glucose tests and only represents your blood glucose level at that point in time. A more accurate indicator can be your glucose levels over three month's time.
- 4 Follow the guidelines prescribed by your physician and registered dietitian for lowering blood glucose. These include getting more exercise, eating a heart healthy diet and losing weight. Make a follow-up appointment for six months after your initial consultation and have your blood drawn again. Be sure they include a HbA1c component in the test.
- 5 Analyze your HbA1c test results. Normal HbA1c results should be less than 7 percent. If your results are within the acceptable range, continue following the advice of your dietitian and physician. If not, confer with them for ways to continue lowering your HbA1c. If none of the suggestions have successfully managed your blood glucose, medications may be prescribed. Some of the more common types of diabetes medications include sulfonylureas, meglitinides, biguanides and alpha-glucosidase inhibitors. Each medication has its own set of side effects and results. Some, like meglitinides, are designed to increase insulin production, while others, like biguanides, lower the amount of blood glucose produced by the liver. Medications should always be taken as a last resort due to side effects, like fluctuating glucose levels, fatigue and nausea.

Tips & Warnings

- Have your drawn by a licensed, clinical laboratory.
- Ask specifically for a HbA1c test. It is not always a normal part of blood panels.

- Communicate with your doctor regarding any recent illnesses and physical issues that might affect your test results.

Resources

- [Diagnosing Diabetes](#)
- [Oral Medications for Diabetes](#)