



National Diabetes Education Program Check Your Hemoglobin A1c I.Q.

Find out how much you know about the hemoglobin A1c test (also called H-b-A-1-c). Mark each statement **true (T)** or **false (F)**. Then see how you did by checking the correct answers and explanations on the bottom of this page.

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| 1. A hemoglobin A1c test measures the average amount of sugar in your blood over the last 3 months. | T | F |
| 2. It's important to know your hemoglobin A1c number. | T | F |
| 3. All people with diabetes need to have a hemoglobin A1c test. | T | F |
| 4. The hemoglobin A1c goal for people with diabetes is less than 7 percent. | T | F |
| 5. Most people can tell what their blood sugar levels are simply by how they feel. | T | F |
| 6. You can have a "touch of sugar" but don't have to do anything about it. | T | F |
| 7. You can do something about high blood sugar. | T | F |
| 8. A hemoglobin A1c number over 8 percent is a sign that one or more parts of your treatment plan needs to be changed. | T | F |
| 9. A hemoglobin A1c test should be done about once a year. | T | F |
| 10. There's no proof that lowering your hemoglobin A1c number can reduce your chances of getting serious eye, kidney, and nerve disease. | T | F |
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Answers to the Hemoglobin A1c I.Q. Quiz

- 1. True.** The hemoglobin A1C test shows the average amount of sugar in your blood over the last 3 months. It is a simple lab test done by your health care provider. The hemoglobin A1c is the best test to find out if your blood sugar is under control.
- 2. True.** If you know your hemoglobin A1c number, you will know if your blood sugar is under control. A high number is a sign that you should work with your health care provider to change your treatment plan. A good test result is a sign that your treatment plan is working and your blood sugar is under control.
- 3. True.** All people with diabetes should have a hemoglobin A1c test at least twice a year. Regular hemoglobin A1c testing can help you track your blood sugar levels over time to see if they stay close to normal or go up and down. If your blood sugar levels are too high or too low, work with your health care provider to change your treatment plan and reach your target level of control.
- 4. True.** The hemoglobin A1c goal for people with diabetes is less than 7 percent. The findings of a major diabetes study, the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial (DCCT), showed that people with diabetes who keep their hemoglobin A1c levels close to 7 percent have a much better chance of delaying or preventing diabetes problems that affect the eyes, kidneys, nerves than people with hemoglobin A1c levels 8 percent or higher. A change in treatment is almost always needed if your hemoglobin A1c is over 8 percent. But, if you can lower your hemoglobin A1c number by any amount, you will improve your chances of staying healthy.
- 5. False.** Research shows that few people can tell their blood sugar levels simply by how they feel. Testing your blood sugar is the only way to know for sure whether you are reaching your blood sugar goals.
- 6. False.** If you have "sugar" you have diabetes. Diabetes is a serious disease that causes the sugar in your blood to build up in your body. This buildup of sugar can cause you to go blind, suffer a heart attack, lose your feet or legs to amputations, stop your kidneys from working, and even kill you.

There is no cure for diabetes, but there is a lot you can do to control it. For example, you can see your health care provider more often. You can change some of the foods you eat. You can stay at a weight that is right for you. And you can get regular physical activity.

7. **True.** You can do a lot to bring down high blood sugar and get it under control. Start by asking your health care provider for a hemoglobin A1c test. If your hemoglobin A1c test result is too high, talk to your health care provider about how to lower it. To get your blood sugar under control, follow the meal plan recommended by your health care provider, stick a physical activity program, take prescribed diabetes medicines, and consult your health care provider often.
8. **True.** A change in treatment is almost always needed if your hemoglobin A1c is over 8 percent. Common causes of high blood sugar include eating too much food or eating the wrong foods, lack of physical activity, stress, a need to change medicines, and infection or illness. If your hemoglobin A1c is too high, work with your health care provider to change your treatment and reach the goal of less than 7 percent.
9. **False.** You should get a hemoglobin A1c test at least two times a year if your blood sugar is in the target range and stable. If your treatment changes or if your blood sugar stays too high, you should get a hemoglobin A1c test at least every 3 months until your blood sugar level improves.
10. **False.** The DCCT showed that the lower the hemoglobin A1c number, the greater the chances that people with diabetes will slow or prevent the development of serious eye, kidney, and nerve disease. The study also showed that if you can lower your hemoglobin A1c number by any amount, you will improve your chances of staying healthy.