

## **KNOW YOUR A1C**

According to The American Diabetes Association (ADA), people with Diabetes should have their A1C tested two to four times per year. A normal A1C for someone without Diabetes is between 4-6%; anything above that should be considered a sign of Diabetes. The ADA recommends an A1C of 7% or below for diabetics, which greatly reduces your risk of Diabetes complications. Given the importance of the A1C and the risks of Diabetes, you should get your doctor to tell you what your A1C is and, if it is too high, what you can do to lower it.

We would like you to start by taking the Hemoglobin A1C Quiz. If you have Diabetes and you don't know what your A1C (also known as glycated hemoglobin or HbA1c) is, you should. The A1C is critical in the management of both type 1 and type 2 Diabetes. Not enough people with Diabetes have their A1C tested regularly and, when they do, many don't understand the results. You are probably familiar with the standard, fasting blood-glucose test that is used to indicate your current blood sugar levels. The fasting test remains an important part of your Diabetes treatment, but it is only an indication of your glucose level at the moment you take the test. A fasting blood sugar doesn't tell you anything about your blood sugar levels the rest of the time. The A1C test fills this gap by giving you your average blood sugar levels over a two to three month period. The A1C test is a better indicator of how well a person is doing in controlling their blood sugars.

The A1C test does not replace your self-monitoring of blood glucose levels. It is important to continue regular self-monitoring of your blood glucose. In fact, studies suggest that regular self-monitoring of blood glucose correlates with lower A1C values. Patients who consistently monitor their blood glucose levels and understand the relevance of those levels tend to have the lowest A1C values and do better than patients who do not monitor.