Why Check Your A1C

This blood test can help you manage diabetes.

June 2, 2015 By Kate Ferguson

Although home blood sugar testing is very useful to manage your daily blood glucose levels, doctors suggest people living with diabetes also take the A1C test, which measures their average blood sugar levels during the previous two to three months. This screening tool also helps people know if their diabetes management plan is working.

According to the National Institutes of Health, people should aim for their own unique A1C target number. This is because individuals have different A1C targets depending on their diabetes history and general health. Diabetes patients should discuss their A1C target with a health care provider because findings show that if they can keep their A1C level below 7 percent, they can reduce the risk of suffering diabetes complications.

What's more, maintaining good blood glucose control can benefit those with new-onset diabetes for many years to come. But an A1C level that is safe for one person may not be safe for another. For example, keeping an A1C level below 7 percent may not be safe if it leads to problems with hypoglycemia, also called low blood glucose.

Less strict blood sugar control, or an A1C between 7 and 8 percent—or even higher in some circumstances—may be appropriate in people with the following health problems:

- Limited life expectancy
- Long-standing diabetes and difficulty attaining a lower goal
- Severe hypoglycemia
- Advanced diabetes complications such as chronic kidney disease, nerve problems or issues with cardiovascular disease

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/AIC-test-27320-5907