

## What is an A1C test?

The A1C test is a blood test for diagnosing type 1 and type 2 diabetes. It is also used as a tool to screen for prediabetes and to monitor how well your blood glucose levels are controlled. An A1C test (also referred to as a hemoglobin A1C test) will indicate the average blood glucose level over a three-month timeframe. An A1C test shows what percentage of your hemoglobin--a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen--is coated with glucose (glycated hemoglobin). The higher the A1C level, the weaker your body's blood sugar control which may lead to a higher risk for diabetes complications.

## When should I get an A1C test?

People with diabetes are recommended to undergo A1C testing at least twice a year. For type 1 diabetes patients, more frequent testing, as often as every three months, is recommended especially if you and your provider are adjusting treatment, setting blood sugar level targets, or if you are pregnant.

## How does the A1C test work?

A blood cell has a lifespan of approximately three months which makes the A1C test very helpful. At any given time, your body is producing new blood cells and has new and "old" blood cells circulating inside you. Every blood cell carries a history of glucose levels in your body in the form of glycated hemoglobin.

Because the A1C test shows average blood glucose over the past three months, it is not a reliable indicator of blood glucose for any given day, but rather it is an indicator of blood glucose control over time.

## What do the numbers mean?

NORMAL	5.6%
PRE-DIABETES	5.7% to 6.4%
DIABETES	6.5% or Above