



# Be Well: Thriving with Diabetes

Module 2: The Basics of  
Diabetes

# Today's Agenda

- Symptoms of high/low blood sugar - 25 min
- Importance of blood sugar monitoring – 15 min
- Taking care of your feet - 15 min
- Staying on track with medications - 20 min
- Personal goal setting - 30 min
- Summary of today's lesson - 5 min

# High and Low Blood Sugar

# Group question...

- Does anyone know at what level should you keep your blood sugar?



# High and low blood sugar



The diagram features a central purple rectangular box with the word "Sugar" in a stylized, light green font. To the left of this box is a large orange arrow pointing left, and to the right is a large green arrow pointing right. The orange arrow contains the text "Too Low: Below 70" in white. The green arrow contains the text "Too High: Above 130 before meals" in white. Below these two arrows, centered, is the text "But everyone is different!" in black. The entire diagram is set against a white background with a green border.

**Sugar**

**Too Low:**  
Below 70

**Too High:**  
Above 130  
before meals

But everyone is different!

## Group question...

- What can cause high blood sugar?



**Sugar**

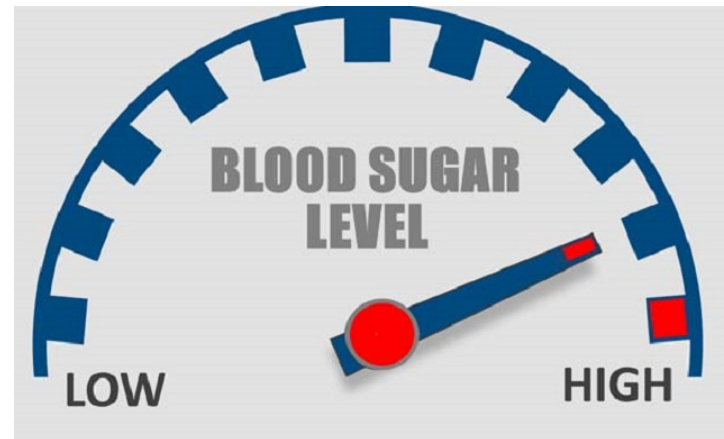
# Causes of high blood sugar

- ◉ Eating too much/too many carbs
- ◉ Not taking enough diabetes medicine
- ◉ Forgetting to take diabetes medicine
- ◉ Not enough physical activity
- ◉ Stress
- ◉ Infections

# How will I know if my blood sugar is too high?

## ○ Symptoms:

- Increased thirst
- Blurred vision
- Increased urination
- Nausea
- Increased hunger
- Headache



**\*\* See Visual 1 in your binder \*\***

## ○ Test your blood sugar



# Special cases of high blood sugar

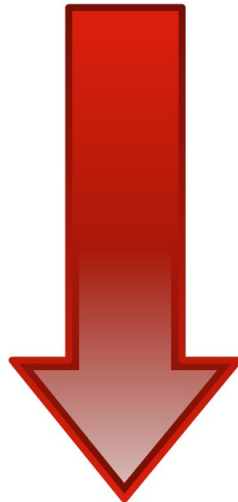
- Blood sugar is over 200 for several days:
  - Call your doctor
- Blood sugar is over 300:
  - Call your doctor immediately.



# Group question...

- What can cause low blood sugar?

*Sugar*



# Causes of low blood sugar

- Skipped meals or snacks
- More physical activity than usual
- Taking too much diabetes medication
- Drinking alcohol on an empty stomach
- Getting rid of an infection that was making your blood sugar high

# How will I know if my blood sugar is too low?

## ○ Symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Dizziness
- Shakiness
- Rapid Heartbeat
- Blurred Vision
- Weakness
- Headache
- Sweating
- Hunger



**\*\* See Visual 2 in binder \*\***

# ! TEST YOUR BLOOD SUGAR! !

# What to do when you have low blood sugar...

- Blood test: sugar is below 70
- Use the 15:15 Rule:
  1. Eat 15 grams of carbohydrates (sugar)
  2. Wait 15 minutes
  3. Re-test your blood
  4. If your blood sugar is not yet above 70....
    - Repeat steps 1-3

**\*\* See Visual 3 in your binder \*\***

# What to do when you have low blood sugar...

- If you don't have your glucose meter with you...THAT'S OKAY!
- If you feel as though you have symptoms of low blood sugar...

**TREAT YOURSELF ANYWAY  
USING THE 15:15 RULE!**

# 15:15 Rule: quick sugars

## ○ Examples of Best Choices:

- 1 medium banana
- ½ apple or ½ cup applesauce
- ½ cup of fruit juice (100% grape juice is a very good choice)
- 1 small box of raisins

# 15:15 Rule: quick sugars

- Good choices in an emergency:
  - 2-3 packets of sugar
  - 1 tablespoon of honey
  - 8-10 LifeSavers
  - ½ cup of soda pop (not diet)
  - 1 cup of non-fat milk
    - Why non-fat only?



# After your blood sugar comes back up to a safe level...

- Blood sugar above 70 after re-testing:
  - Eat a meal within 30 minutes
  - Eat a snack, like crackers with peanut butter or a slice of cheese





## Brainstorm...

- Where are good places to keep extra sugar packets handy in case of emergency?

# How can you prevent low blood sugar in the future?

- Be proactive!
- Be a detective!
  - Which foods or activities gave you low blood sugar in the first place?
  - What changes can be made?



# Importance of Blood Sugar Monitoring

# Why is it important to regularly test blood sugar?

- Blood sugar level is hard to tell based on how you feel
- Doctors know what changes to help you with to keep you healthy
- See Visual 4 in your binder...

# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step #1: Gather your items
  - Glucose meter (glucometer)
  - Lancet device
  - Lancet needles (sterile)
  - Test strips
  - Log book



# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step #2: Wash hands with soap and water and thoroughly dry with a clean towel
- Step #3: Load your lancet device
  - Remove the cap from the lancing device
  - Insert a new (sterile) lancet into the lancing device
  - Twist to remove the head on the lancet
  - Without touching the needle put the cap back on the device
  - Set the appropriate depth using the number dial

# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step #4: Set up your meter
  - Insert a new test strip into the meter
  - Inserting a test strip will automatically turn it on



# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step # 5: Prick your finger to get a drop of blood
  - Place the lancing device against the side of your clean finger
  - Pull back the trigger (specific to device)
  - Press the button on the lancing device to get a drop of blood
  - Touch blood drop to the edge of test strip in the meter

# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step #6: Read your meter
  - Write this number down in log book
  - Remember to include the date and time
- Step #7: Wash your hands again

# Instructions for blood sugar testing

- Step #8: Disposal of lancet and used test strip
  - Used lancet → “sharps” container
  - Used test strip → trash can

# Practice the steps to blood sugar testing with the handout

- Handout #1



# Answers

- 1 Gather all needed items.
- 3 Remove the cap from the lancing device. Insert a new lancet into the lancing device and put the cap back on.
- 2 Wash your hands with soap and water.
- 4 Insert a strip into the meter (this will turn the meter on).
- 5 To get a drop of blood to test, place the lancing device against the side of your clean finger. Pull back the trigger. Press the button on the lancing device. Touch the test drip to the blood drop.
- 7 Wash your hands again.
- 8 Remove the cap from your lancing device. Remove the lancet and place in a sharps container.
- 6 The meter will say how much sugar is in your blood. Write that number in your log book.

# Checking your blood sugar at home

- Optional Home Practice #1
- Glucose monitoring instructions quick reference card

# What is a Hemoglobin A1c test?

- Sugar in the blood “sticks” to hemoglobin (red blood cells)
- Sugar stays “stuck” to a red blood cell until it dies
  - About every 2-3 months
  - The body replaces dead red blood cells with new ones
- See Visual 5 in your binder...



# What is a Hemoglobin A1c test?

- Doctors order A1c tests every few months
- Lab blood draw
- A1c reported as a %
- A1c can provide info about:
  - Long-term blood sugar control (blood sugar average over the last 3 months)
  - Higher blood sugar on average during the last 3 months = higher A1c
- Doctor will provide an A1c “goal”





# Taking Care of Your Feet

# What can diabetes cause?

- Nerve damage
- Reduced blood supply to hands and feet
- Dry skin

# What is the danger?

Nerve  
damage +  
reduced  
blood supply

Loss of feeling  
in feet and/or  
foot shape  
changes

Blisters, sores,  
ulcers,  
infections



# How to prevent foot damage and follow proper footcare

- Control blood sugar
- Don't smoke or use tobacco
- Check feet daily for sores or blisters
- Wear shoes and socks that fit well and do not squeeze
- Protect from heat and cold
- See Visual 6 in your binder...

# Proper footcare: other suggestions

- Wear shoes or slippers at all times
- Shop for shoes in the afternoon or evening when feet are often a bit swollen
  - Why?
- Wash feet daily (if possible)
- Check the temperature of bath water with your elbow before getting in the tub
- Apply lotion
- Avoid heating pads/electric blankets
- Call your doctor with any concerns

# How to check your feet

1. Remove your shoes and socks
2. Check your socks for blood stains.
3. Feel feet for calluses
4. Look for any scratches or changes in color
5. Feel feet for temperature changes
6. Check between the toes for tears or fungus
7. Use pressure to detect painful areas in foot





# **Staying on Track with Medications**

# Common medications for diabetes

Metformin

Exenatide, liraglutide,  
dulaglutide,  
semaglutide

Pioglitazone

Glyburide, glipizide,  
glimepiride

Sitagliptin, saxagliptin,  
linagliptin, vildagliptin

Rapaglinide, nateglinide

Insulin:  
short/intermediate/long-  
acting

Pramlintide

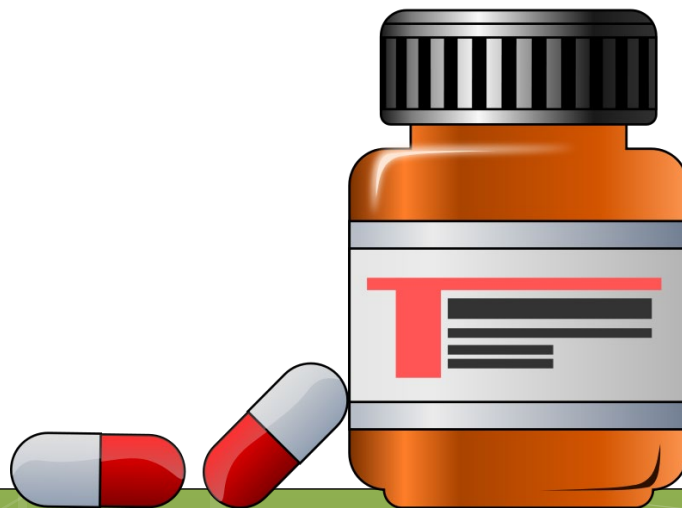
Acarbose, miglitol

**See Visual 7 in your binder...**



# Group questions...

- What are some benefits to taking your medication?
- What are some of the challenges you've had in taking your medications?



# Problem Solving Around Taking Medications

- Communication is key!
  - Let your provider know



# Let's look at an example...

- Joe's prescription says to take Metformin with meals both in the morning and evening. He often forgets his morning pill because his morning routine changes from day to day. Yet, Joe easily remembers his evening pill as he always eats dinner with his family at the same time. His family would see his pillbox and ask if he took his medicine. Joe wasn't sure what to do, but after discussing it with his doctor, it turned out that he could take a different type of Metformin (Metformin XR) that only needs to be taken once a day. So, he successfully switched and has been taking his medication consistently ever since.

# Let's practice staying on track using the "My Medication Routine" form

- See Visual 8/Handout 3 in your binder...



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# Setting Personal Goals

# Set yourself up for success!

- Set goals best for you using SMART
- See Visual 9 in your binder



# What does a SMART goal mean?

- S = specific
- M = measurable
- A = achievable
- R = realistic
- T = time-bound



# SMART questions to ask

- S = specific
  - What do you want to do and how will you do it?
- M = measurable
  - How often are you going to work on this goal?
- A = achievable
  - It must be important to you and something you are committed to doing
- R = realistic
  - It must be something you feel you can do
- T = time-bound
  - When do you want to reach your goal?

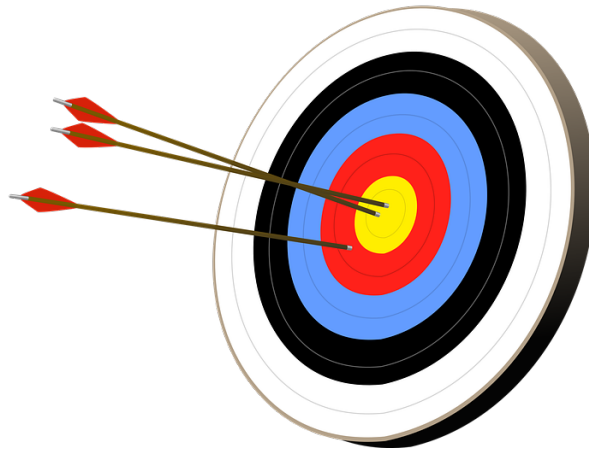
# SMART goals: long- and short-term

- Short-term goal examples
  - Walk to the grocery store three times a week starting this Sunday
  - I will call my sister two times a week starting tomorrow
  - Eat a fruit or vegetable every day this week
- Long-term goal examples
  - Lose 10 pounds in time for my high school reunion in 3 months
  - Improve my A1c in the next 6 months
  - In 4 months I want to walk up the stairs to my apartment without getting out of breath

# Time to set your own personal goals...

- Home Practice #2 – Setting a Personal Goal

## GOAL SETTING



# Summary of today's lesson

- What did you all learn today?
- Anything new or surprising for you?
- What are you looking forward to learning more about or working on for yourself?

# Summary of today's lesson

- High and Low blood sugar
  - Causes
  - Symptoms
  - What to do when you have high/low blood sugar
    - 15:15 Rule for low blood sugar
  - Special cases of high blood sugar
- Blood sugar monitoring
  - Importance
  - How to do it
- Taking care of your feet
- Staying on track with medications
  - Medication Routine Sheet
- Goal setting
  - SMART goals for you!