

Better Diabetes Management

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Blood Sugar Levels And Their Connection To Food

(NAPSA)—A recent survey* found that 63 percent of the 15 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes are missing some valuable insight into their blood sugar levels by not testing those levels after meals. After-meal blood sugar testing can help diabetes patients see the impact of their food and portion choices on their blood sugar levels. With two-thirds of the 13 million Americans with type 2 diabetes having blood sugar averages that are out of control, the need for a better understanding of how to control blood sugar is critical.

The survey also found that nearly three in five respondents (59 percent) reported that they do not regularly use their blood sugar meter's results to help them adjust their food portions, and 48 percent said they don't use their results to help guide their food choices.

According to some physicians, this kind of neglect can be significant. If a person with diabetes doesn't see and address the blood sugar rises—or even spikes—that can occur after meals, it could contribute to poor overall blood sugar control, which can ultimately lead to long-term diabetes complications. In fact, high blood sugar after meals has been shown to be an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which strikes people with diabetes twice as often as those without.

While testing and controlling blood sugar levels before meals has long been recommended for people with diabetes, a number of physicians today are also advising some of their patients to focus on controlling their after-meal blood sugar levels, particularly in light of today's "supersize" culture, where portion control can be a challenge.

"After-meal test results are important because many diabetes patients experience a rise or upward spike in their blood sugar levels after eating, peaking at around the two-hour mark," said Anne Peters, M.D., director of Clinical Diabetes Programs at the University of Southern California and author of the recently published book *Conquering Diabetes*.



Experts say it's important for many with diabetes to do some of their blood sugar tests after mealtime, not just before. A new meter helps to make this easy.

Dr. Peters added that "reviewing after-meal blood sugar results can help patients see the link between what they ate and the blood sugar increases that follow."

One company recently introduced a new device to assist people with diabetes in testing and managing their blood sugar before and after meals. The OneTouch® Ultra®2 Blood Glucose Monitoring System from LifeScan, Inc. offers a number of features that can help diabetes patients and their health care providers see the connections between their food and their blood sugar results.

For instance, the meter enables the user to flag and label a specific blood sugar result as coming from a "before-meal" or "after-meal" test. It also displays before- and after-meal blood sugar averages from the previous 7-, 14- and 30-day periods, which can help users spot meal-related trends.

"A meter like this can help diabetes patients see which food choices are working and which are not, so they can make changes," stated Dr. Peters.

An illustrated educational booklet and DVD containing information and practical tips are included with the meter to help patients manage their diabetes effectively around meals. In addition, all the meter's information can be viewed in Spanish. Patients should check with their health care professional to find out if after-meal testing is right for them, and should always test as their doctor recommends.

To learn more, visit www.TestingAroundMeals.com.

* The survey, conducted among 500 adults with diabetes by research firm Newman-Stein-Friedman Inc., had a margin of error of ± 4 percent.