

Questions and Answers About Pre-Diabetes and the Hemoglobin A1C Laboratory Test

Questions	Answers
<p>What is the issue consumers should aware of regarding pre-diabetes and testing?</p>	<p><u>Our Main Message</u> is that 57 million Americans are on the brink of diabetes—this is in addition to the 24 million who already have the condition—and that a convenient, easy lab test can help pull them back from the brink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>We want Americans to know</u> about this so they can take action to stop diabetes—and its terrible damage. • AND, we want Americans to know that <u>testing for diabetes has never been more convenient</u>. The American Diabetes Association recently recommended the addition of the consumer-friendly hemoglobin A1c test to the list of tests that detect diabetes.
<p>What is the hemoglobin A1C test?</p>	<p>The hemoglobin A1C test measures a patient’s average blood glucose level over the preceding 2 to 3 months. (There is no need for multiple tests.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important: It is <u>convenient for consumers</u> because they don’t have to avoid eating before taking the test.
<p>Why is this test so important?</p> <p>What makes this test different from other tests?</p>	<p>The A1C test gives you a <u>better picture</u> of what your blood glucose really is because the test is not affected by short-term dietary changes. (Unlike other diabetes tests.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, the results are less likely to be affected by glucose changes caused by recent illness or stress. <p>Doctors have long noted that many of their patients who need lab tests for blood glucose <u>forget to fast</u>. So the patients can’t get the test immediately, and they might not even come back to get it later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December, 2009, the American Diabetes Association added the A1C lab test to its list of tests recommended for identifying diabetes. <u>They believe the added convenience will improve consumer willingness</u> to get tested.

<p>Why is this issue so important?</p>	<p>When you add the 57 million people with pre-diabetes to the 24 million whom already have full-blown diabetes, it means that roughly one-quarter of the US population is facing one of the most damaging diseases of our time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of diabetes can be blindness, heart disease, kidney failure, death—and high costs. <p>But THE GOOD NEWS IS....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Consumers can do something about it.</u> Often, lifestyle and diet changes are all that is needed.
<p>Why is pre-diabetes so bad?</p>	<p>As many as 40% of people with pre-diabetes will become fully diabetic in 3-8 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AND patients with pre-diabetes are already at risk: Individuals with pre-diabetes already face a 50% greater chance of heart disease or stroke, and they face increased complications associated with kidney disease, eye conditions, and neurological problems, among others.
<p>How can this test help consumers battle diabetes?</p>	<p>The A1C test tells you if there is a problem, so you can take the steps <u>necessary to fix it.</u> Often, that just means changes in diet, exercise, and lifestyle.</p> <p>Once you know where you stand on your blood glucose level, it's pretty astounding what you can do to keep from developing full-blown diabetes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent study found that adults with high blood glucose levels could <u>cut the risk of diabetes by 58% just with changes in diet and lifestyle.</u> And these changes have been shown to last 10 years or more. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It also appears that lifestyle changes have the most lasting effect. ○ The study also found that the use of metformin, a common diabetes drug, can reduce the risk by 31%.
<p>How important is it to keep your blood glucose levels in the normal range?</p>	<p>If patients maintain normal blood sugar levels, they can gain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five more years of life • Eight more years of eyesight • Six more years free of kidney disease
<p>What is the effect of diabetes and testing on health costs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Stopping a disease before it starts may be the greatest health savings of all.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The A1C blood glucose test can show you the first signs of diabetes. ○ With that information, your doctor can set you on a course to

	<p>delay or prevent a disease that can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a diabetes-related heart attack (\$28,000) - or diabetes-related kidney failure, which requires kidney dialysis (\$70,000 per year) - to say nothing of blindness, amputation (\$27,000), peripheral artery disease (\$6,000) and stroke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>But you can't manage what you don't measure</u> – so having that blood glucose test can warn you to take steps to prevent or manage what could be a very expensive disease. • In diabetes alone, American workers lose \$2.6 billion in wages every year because they are too sick to go to work. It could take you months to recuperate from a heart attack, for example, which can be caused by out-of-control diabetes.
<p>How bad is diabetes and pre-diabetes in this country?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, <u>some 24 million Americans</u> have been diagnosed with diabetes or they currently live with the disease, but have not been diagnosed. • The costs of diabetes are <u>\$174 billion per year</u>. This includes the costs from the complications of the disease—heart disease, kidney failure, and blindness, among others—and the chain-reaction of economic damage, such as work loss, disability, and premature death. • But these numbers just scratch the surface. The true challenge facing us is the <u>additional 57 million people</u> in the US who have pre-diabetes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In fact, the extra medications and <u>health services needed by those with pre-diabetes add an additional \$25 billion annually</u> to overall health care spending.
<p>Are any other tests used for diabetes</p>	<p>Other tests include the fasting plasma glucose and the oral glucose tolerance test, both of which require overnight fasting.</p>
<p>Where can I get more information</p>	<p>Many websites are available to give you information about diabetes, pre-diabetes, and testing. When you go to these websites, look for the “hemoglobin A1c test” or the “HbA1c test.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Diabetes Association December 29, 2009 press release announcing new clinical practice recommendations on the hemoglobin A1C test, http://www.diabetes.org/for-media/2009/cpr-2010-a1c-diagnostic-tool.html • The American Diabetes Association, www.diabetes.org • The NIH's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/ • The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/