WHAT'S MY A_{1C} NUMBER? Hb_{A1c} TESTING

Every few months you can find out how well you are managing your diabetes with a glycosylated hemoglobin (Hb_{A1c}). This test is a longer-term test than daily blood glucose monitoring.
The Hb_{A1c} test provides your average blood glucose level over a period of three to four months.

Can I just have an A_{1C} every 3 months and stop daily finger sticks?

Please do not assume that an A_{1C} can replace daily blood glucose testing. The Hb_{A1c} test serves a different, yet equally important purpose. The A_{1C} measures the amount of sugar that attaches to protein in the red blood cell. Because red blood cells live for about three months, Hb_{A1c} tests show your average blood glucose during that time.

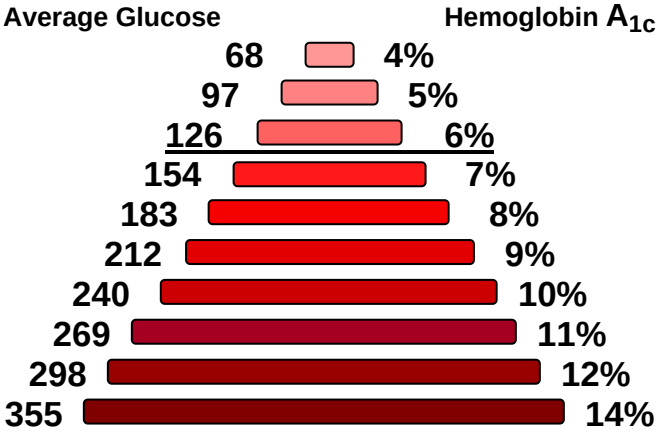
The A1C test is like a movie of what your blood glucose has been during a 3 month period.
Whereas daily monitoring with a finger stick is like a camera shot of your blood glucose at the present time.
The finger stick (fast picture) helps to pinpoint specific high and low trends in blood glucose during daily living.

Daily blood glucose alert you to:
(1) immediate problems ie.. illness/stress (Type 1 and 2)
(2) how specific foods and activities effect our body (Type 1 and 2).
(3) need for medication changes (Type 1 and 2)
(4) when your pancreas is failing more (Type 2).

How often do I need to have my A1C checked?

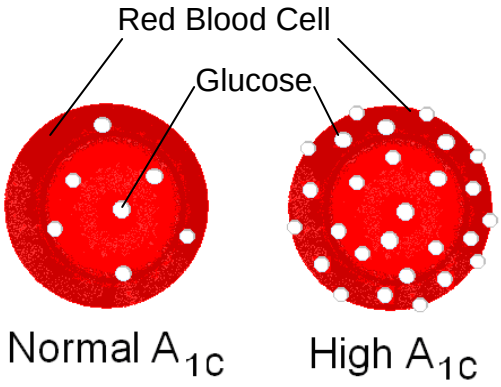
The American Diabetes Association recommends that you have an A_{1C} test done when you are first diagnosed with diabetes and annually thereafter. However, if management of your diabetes is in poor control, or you simply what to ensure you're doing OK you will have it done three to four times a year.

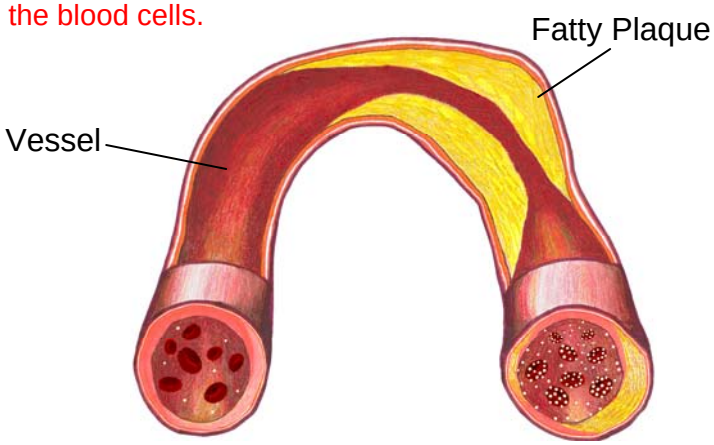
Approximate Relationship between Hb_{A1c} and estimated Average Glucose (eAG)



A_{1C} (Hemoglobin A_{1C})

The A_{1C} test checks your diabetes control over a *three month period.*
The A_{1C} test looks at the amount of **glucose** that has **attached to blood cells**.
As glucose levels rise, more and more glucose attaches to the blood cells.





The A_{1C} test result is shown as a percentage.
The target range for the A_{1C} is < 7% but **below 6%** is better.
The higher the A_{1C}, the greater the risk for heart disease.