

# All About Your Alc

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Rural Health Group - Diabetes Education Division

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## 1. What is an Alc?

An Alc is a lab test that measures your blood sugar average over a period of three months. Red blood cells are made of a molecule, hemoglobin, that picks up oxygen in the blood and gives the blood its color. Glucose sticks to the hemoglobin to make a 'glycosylated hemoglobin' molecule, called hemoglobin Alc, hbAlc, **or simply Alc**. Ask your doctor what your Alc level is!

## 2. What do the numbers look like?

Your Alc level is equal to the three month average of the number you see on your blood sugar machine. See the chart below to find out what your average blood sugar is as it relates to your Alc.

Alc level (%)	Average blood sugar equivalent
12	298
11	269
10	240
9	212
8	183
7	154
6	126

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## 3. What should my Alc be?

The American Diabetes Association Alc goal is less than 7%. The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) says to work toward a goal of 6.5% or less. However, these are just recommendations. Your individual goal may not be the same. This should be assessed by you and your doctor according to your particular health conditions.

## 4. If I have a high Alc, why should I lower it?

For every point you lower your A1C levels, you lower your risk of developing a variety of complications :

- eye disease risk is reduced by 76%
- kidney disease risk is reduced by 50%
- nerve disease risk is reduced by 60%
- any cardiovascular disease event risk is reduced by 42%
- nonfatal heart attack, stroke, or risk of death from cardiovascular causes is reduced by 57%

## 5. Why does the Alc matter?

The effects of prolonged high blood sugar levels are not always immediately noticeable, but the signs of continued neglect can show themselves at any time. Potential complications include:

- Eye disease
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Lower brain function

## 6. Why should I see my doctor?

As you work to bring your A1C levels down, don't forget to check in regularly with your doctor to monitor your progress. Regular visits will help you keep tabs on your blood glucose trends, blood pressure, cholesterol, and potential nerve damage to name a few. Your doctor can also help fine-tune your medications and help you to figure out how all these work together to help you control your diabetes and lower your Alc levels.

# Get Your Fruit Fix!

## Try an apple a day.

Did you know apples can benefit people with diabetes? The soluble fiber in an apple may slow digestion, which research shows may help regulate cholesterol and stabilize blood glucose.



## Shopping for fruit.

When shopping for fruit, fresh, canned, or frozen are all nutritious options. Just steer clear of frozen or canned fruits that are packed in syrup. Frozen fruit is often picked and frozen at the peak of freshness, so it can sometimes be more nutritious than fresh fruit, which loses nutrients in shipping and storage.

## Don't avoid fruit.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that most adults, including diabetics, eat 2 cups of fruit per day. Because fruit does have carbs, you need to watch portions. If you notice your blood glucose rising too much after you eat fruit, you may be eating large portions. One serving of fruit has 15 grams of carbs and 60 calories. A serving is a small piece of whole fruit, half a large piece of fruit, or about 1/2 cup of canned or packaged fruit.





**Starches:**  
 Pasta  
 Cereal  
 Oats  
 Rice  
 Bagels  
 Crackers  
 Whole Grains

**Candy/Sweets:**  
 Gumdrops  
 Chocolate  
 Regular Soda




**Legumes:**  
 Beans

**Starchy Vegetables:**  
 Potatoes  
 Corn  
 Peas




**Nonstarchy Vegetables:**  
 Broccoli  
 Green Beans  
 Spinach  
 Lettuce  
 Sweet and Hot Peppers  
 Tomatoes

# Foods That Contain Carbs!

This page shows healthful carbohydrate sources—fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and legumes— as well as some refined carb sources with added sugar, such as sweets, desserts, and drinks, that everyone should eat in moderation.

**Fruit Juices**



**Desserts:**  
 Ice Cream  
 Cake  
 Pie  
 Cookies



**Dairy:**  
 Milk  
 Pudding  
 Yogurt  
 Cottage Cheese



**Fruits**



# May 2011 Diabetes Support Group Meetings

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Littleton Sr. Center 11am—12pm	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Folsom Sr. Center 9am—10am Jordan Center 3pm—4:30pm	12	13	14
15	16	17 Healthlink 10am—11:30am	18	19 RHG at Scotland Neck 12pm—1pm	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Enfield Med. Clinic 12pm—1pm	27	28
29	30	31				

All classes are FREE and open to the public! You do not have to be a patient of Rural Health Group to attend!  
 For more information or for questions, call Marie Jones at 252-589-1036.