**My blood sugar level is ... (do YOU know yours?)**

*Do you know what your blood sugar level is?*

*Or what it should be?*

*What does “blood sugar” even mean?*

We have all these answers.

Blood sugar is another word for blood glucose and it’s the amount of glucose (a type of sugar) found in your bloodstream. We get this glucose from the food we eat – mainly carbohydrates – and it’s the main source of energy for our body’s cells, tissues and organs[[1]](#footnote-1).

In other words, glucose = good.

**BUT** we need the right amount: not too much and not too little, for overall good health. Too much and we can develop long-term health issues, too little and we won’t have enough energy for our normal body functions.

**Blood sugar levels: hitting the sweet spot**

To maintain stable blood sugar levels, we rely on insulin produced by the pancreas. So, what does insulin do? It facilitates the uptake of glucose from the blood into the cells, where it can be used for energy or stored for later.

People with type 1 diabetes don’t produce insulin at all, while people with type 2 diabetes are insulin-resistant, both of which lead to high blood sugar levels and the risk of diabetes-related complications including blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and lower limb amputations[[2]](#footnote-2).

**How do I measure my blood sugar levels?**

– with your annual Vitality Health Check.

This is a simple and easy set of essential health screenings and preventative tests. The VHC covers blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, weight and signing a non-smoker’s declaration.

Blood glucose is measured through the finger-prick method, a test strip and a glucometer, and you get your results within seconds. This is most accurate and easier to interpret when done in a fasting state – this means no food or drink for 8 hours before the test.

**Blood glucose levels in diagnosing diabetes[[3]](#footnote-3):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Glucose test** | **Normal** | **Prediabetes** | **Diabetes** |
| **Random** | < 11.1 mmol/l | N/A | > 11.1 mmol/l |
| **Fasting** | < 5.5 mmol/l | 5.5 to 6.9 mmol/l | > 7.0 mmol/l |
| **2-hour post-eating** | < 7.8 mmol/l | 7.8 to 11.0 mmol/l | > 11.1 mmol/l |

*NOTE: having a high level of blood glucose doesn’t necessarily mean that you have a medical condition. According to the Cleveland Clinic, other factors such as certain medications can affect your levels. Healthcare providers rely on more than a single blood glucose test to diagnose diabetes.*

If you do get an out-of-range blood glucose reading, your healthcare professional will advise you on the next steps which usually means an appointment with your doctor for more thorough tests.

**Healthy habits; healthier blood glucose levels**

The good news is that type 2 diabetes is largely preventable and manageable through healthy habits and lifestyle changes. The three things you need to focus on: eating healthy, exercising regularly and taking any prescribed medication correctly.

*For more information about Vitality’s evidence-based approach that encourages and rewards members for healthier living, visit the*[*Vitality Global*](https://www.vitalityglobal.com/)*website.*

1. Cleveland Clinic. Diabetes. [Link](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/7104-diabetes) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CDC. What is diabetes. [Link](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Diabetes.co.uk. Blood sugar level ranges. [Link](https://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes_care/blood-sugar-level-ranges.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)