

Blood Sugar and Hemoglobin A1C

Understanding the difference between your daily blood sugar and your Hemoglobin A1C is essential for tracking your health.

Daily Blood Sugar

Think of daily blood sugar as a **snapshot** of a single moment in time.

- **What it measures:** The amount of glucose in your blood right now.
- **How it changes:** It rises and falls continuously based on food, stress, exercise, and medication.
- **Standard Targets:**
 - * **Fasting / Before Meals:** 80 to 130 mg/dL.
 - **1-2 Hours After a Meal:** Less than 180 mg/dL.

Hemoglobin A1C

Think of the A1C as a **three-month average**.

- **What it measures:** The percentage of red blood cells that have glucose attached to them. Because red blood cells live for about 3 months, this test shows your average control over time.
- **How it changes:** It changes slowly over weeks and months, not hours. It is typically tested at a doctor's lab 2 to 4 times a year.
- **The Numbers:**
 - **Normal:** Below 5.7%
 - **Prediabetes:** 5.7% to 6.4%
 - **Diabetes:** 6.5% or higher (*A common general target for managed diabetes is below 7.0%*)

Why You Need Both

- **Daily checks** tell you what to do *right now* (e.g., treat a low, take insulin, or go for a walk).
- **The A1C test** tells you if your overall management plan is working or if your daily routines need a big-picture adjustment.