

Fond Du Lac Human Services
Division Pharmacies



Medicine Talk

By Nicole Madsen

If you are one of the 12% of Native Americans who has diabetes, you have probably wondered why it is so important for you to check your blood sugars so often. The thought of pricking your finger (sometimes several times a day) may seem as cumbersome as it is uncomfortable. But this tedious task is far more important than you may think.

Diabetes has profound effects on the blood vessels, nerves, and kidneys. Good blood sugar control and proper use of medications can decrease the chances of developing complications associated with this disease.

The purpose of blood sugar testing is to ensure that the diabetic patient's readings are kept within the normal range. Readings outside of the normal range may indicate a need for dietary changes or, more commonly, medication changes. Blood sugar readings are a beneficial tool to help medical providers adjust diabetic medications to ensure patients are getting just the right amount of these drugs.

Other factors, such as exercise and foods eaten during the day, are also important components to assist providers in determining changes in therapy – here's why. Each diabetic medication works in a different way in the body. The doses of these medications are evaluated and changed based on blood sugar readings. A good example of a common medication used for diabetes is metformin - Glucophage®. Metformin works by reducing the amount of sugar our bodies produce. Blood sugar readings taken right away in the morning, before meals, or at bedtime indicate how well metformin is working for a patient. On the other hand, glyburide - Micronase®, works by reducing the amount of sugar in our bodies after we eat something. Blood sugar readings taken shortly after meals indicate how well glyburide is working. By keeping a daily log of foods consumed, exercise, and blood sugar readings, your provider will be able to evaluate your medication's effectiveness. Changes can then be made to your medications to reflect your needs.

As you can see, different factors may contribute to medication adjustments in diabetic patients. Blood sugar readings and the time of day the readings were taken with respect to meals or snacks are the most important components to aid your provider in evaluating your progress and medication regimen.

Stop in to the pharmacy for a logbook or meter teaching. We are always available to answer any questions you may have.