

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

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### If I already own a glucose meter and lancets, can I use them while I am in the hospital?

While you are in the hospital, we will test your home meter to make sure it is accurate. To do this, your blood glucose will be checked with a lab test or hospital glucose meter once a day. Those results will be compared with the results from your home meter. The two readings should be at least within 10% to 20% of each other.

You may use your lancets from home to do your fingersticks.

### How can I make sure my blood glucose is controlled after I leave the hospital?

- Make an appointment to see your primary care provider or diabetes care provider within 2 weeks after you leave the hospital.
- Share your blood glucose results with your provider at every clinic visit.
- Review your diabetes medicines or insulin instructions at every clinic visit.



# High Blood Glucose

*While you are in the hospital*

**High blood glucose (*hyperglycemia*) is when the sugar, or glucose, in your bloodstream is higher than normal. This handout answers common questions about high blood glucose that may occur while you are in the hospital.**

### Why is my blood glucose being tested?

People with high blood glucose may be at risk for infection, poor wound healing, and dehydration. Your blood glucose will be tested to find out if you need medicines to control it.

### How is it tested?

Your blood glucose may be tested:

- By a blood draw from a vein in your arm
- Through your *intravenous* (IV) line
- By a “fingerstick” (a small lancet is used to prick a tiny hole in the skin of your finger to get a small amount of blood to test)

## What causes high blood glucose?

### *Medicines*

*Glucocorticoids* or *steroids* (like prednisone) are given to suppress the immune system and sometimes given to prevent nausea that is linked to chemotherapy treatment. Patients may receive these medicines to prevent rejection of an organ transplant, or to treat inflammatory disorders such as arthritis and ulcerative colitis. One side effect of these medicines is high blood glucose.

### *Stress*

The emotional and physical stress of having an illness or surgery may cause short-term high blood glucose.

### *Diabetes*

Diabetes is a *chronic* (lifelong) disease that requires daily management to control blood glucose. You may already know you have diabetes before your hospital stay. Some patients are diagnosed with diabetes during their hospital stay, when high blood glucose is detected during routine blood tests.

## How is high blood glucose treated?

While you are in the hospital, your high blood glucose may be treated with:

- **Insulin**, either by injection or through your IV.
- **Oral diabetes medicine** such as Metformin or Glyburide.

## Why is my blood glucose checked so often?

Insulin given through an IV lowers blood glucose very quickly. Your dose may need to be adjusted every hour to avoid low blood sugars. This means your blood glucose must be watched closely and checked often.

## How can I help keep my blood glucose under control while I am in the hospital?

- Make sure your nurses know when you will be eating your meals.
- Ask your nurse to check your blood sugar before you eat each meal.
- If you are being given insulin, ask your nurse to give it to you 15 minutes before you eat your meal.

## Will I need to check my blood glucose at home?

Your health care team may ask you to check your blood glucose at home and follow up in clinic to make sure that it is in the normal range.

If you need to take diabetes medicine or insulin at home, you will also need to check your blood glucose regularly. You may be asked to check it before meals and at bedtime. These readings will tell you how much insulin you need.

Nursing staff will give you a device called a *glucose meter* and will teach you how to use it. You will be given a prescription for lancets, which you will use to poke your fingertips, and test strips to be used with your glucose meter. Be sure to record these results and review them with your primary care provider or your diabetes care provider.

## If I am on insulin in the hospital, will I need to be on it after I go home?

Insulin is just one medicine that lowers blood glucose. Your care team will work with you to decide if insulin will be helpful to you after you leave the hospital.

If insulin is prescribed for you to use at home, nursing staff will teach you:

- How to use an insulin syringe or pen.
- How much insulin to give yourself, and when to give it. Insulin may be prescribed 1 to 4 times a day.