

Q. What is a normal blood sugar level?

A. Your blood sugar level is used to measure your risk for diabetes. A simple blood test can tell you what your blood sugar level is. This is usually measured after fasting for 8 hours (no food, and only water to drink).

A normal fasting blood sugar level is 70 to 89 mg/dl, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Fasting Blood Sugar Levels

- Normal 70-89 mg/dl
- High normal 90-99 mg/dl
- Prediabetes 100-125 mg/dL
- Diabetes 126+ mg/dL

If your blood sugar level is in the “high normal” range, you are still at risk for type 2 diabetes. In one study, researchers tracked the blood sugar levels of 46,000 people for seven years. People with a blood sugar level between 95-99 were 2.33 times more likely to develop diabetes than people with normal blood sugar levels. And even people with a blood sugar level between 90-94 were 1.49 times more likely to develop diabetes.

If your blood sugar level is in the “high normal” range, you could develop diabetes within the next few years, especially if you have any of the following risk factors:

- A family history of diabetes
- Are overweight or obese



- Live a sedentary lifestyle
- Smoke or use tobacco
- Have high blood pressure

An estimated 26 million people in the United States have diabetes. Another 79 million people have prediabetes. And if current trends continue, about 1 in 3 Americans will have diabetes by 2050. Healthcare costs for a person with diabetes are 2.3 times higher than a person without diabetes. And it is a condition that damages your arteries, nerves, eyes, kidneys, and other organs.

You should do everything you can to avoid developing diabetes. And if your blood sugar level is above “high normal,” you can still make changes to prevent diabetes from damaging your health. Having a blood test at least once a year as part of a health risk assessment or

annual check-up is a good way to monitor your blood sugar levels.

To manage your blood sugar levels and prevent or control diabetes:

- Lose any amount of excess weight.
- Get at least 30 minutes of regular exercise a day, such as brisk walking.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, nuts and seeds, and legumes.
- Avoid or limit processed foods like white bread, white rice, soft drinks, chips, sugar, and sweets.
- Avoid or limit red and processed meats.
- Control blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides with a healthy diet, regular exercise, and medication if necessary.

Get your blood sugar levels checked. If you’re in the normal range, keep on making healthy lifestyle choices. If your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, set a goal to lose weight, eat healthier, and exercise more. You’ll feel better and live longer.

Sources:
 American Diabetes Association.
 American Journal of Medicine.
 Journal of the American Medical Association.

