

Dealing with diabetes: day to day

Levels: 2 and 3

Subject: How to take a blood-glucose reading

TEACHER

STUDENTS

1/2



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You've, probably, seen a school friend with diabetes using a device with a screen that looks something like an MP3 player or a mobile phone.

The device is called a glucometer. If you ask your friend what it's for, he'll tell you it checks the level of **glucose** in his blood – or, just, it checks 'sugar' levels.

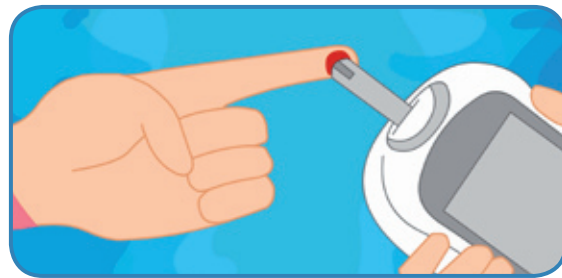
How does it work?



He pierces the skin on his fingertip with a device that looks something like pen - only this has a very fine needle!

This helps him draw a tiny amount of blood.

He inserts a small plastic tab - called a disposable strip - into the glucometer and, then, smears a drop of blood onto it.



He waits a few seconds and a number comes up on screen. That's how much glucose there is in his blood!

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Blood should always have a regular amount of glucose in it. In a person who doesn't have diabetes, the pancreas ensures blood-glucose levels stay regular, producing more insulin only when the body tells it to.

But, because your friend has got diabetes, it's up to her to ensure blood-glucose levels stay regular and to work out how much insulin to inject, when his body tells them to.

Working out how much insulin to inject is not easy! The nurse at his diabetes health center and his parents are there, to help him learn.

- He needs to know how much **glucose** he'll get from what he's just eaten, and...
- approximately, how much he'll be consuming, or using up, during exercise.

There's no other way to work out how much **insulin** he'll need to inject into his body.

Because diabetes means the glucose in your blood goes up and down - depending on what you're doing - he'll need to have several glucose checks, throughout the day.

He might need to have a glucose check at break time, or during P.E., or in the school canteen.

Sometimes, he may even need to check his glucose in the middle of class. He'll, probably, only do that, though, if he feels his glucose is getting uncomfortably low - that would be a hypoglycemia!

It doesn't really hurt; it stings, a little. But it's, definitely, not as bad as pricking your finger on a rose thorn!