

# Diabetes:

## What do the numbers mean?

### A1C

**What is it?** The A1C test is used to determine how well your diabetes is being managed by providing an average of your blood sugar control over a 6 to 12 week period.

**What is a good number?** A normal A1C for patients WITHOUT diabetes should be between 4% and 5.6%. A patient WITH diabetes should have an A1C below 7%.

**What does a bad number mean?** The higher the hemoglobin A1C, the higher the risk of developing diabetes related complications, which studies have repeatedly shown to result from out-of-control diabetes.

**How often should I get tested?** Diabetic patients should have this test done every three months to make sure their blood sugars have reached the target level of control.

### HDL

**What is it?** HDL is the “good” cholesterol. It travels through your blood stream removing bad cholesterol.

**What is a good number?** High HDL levels reduce risk of heart disease. HDL levels should be above 40 mg/dl.

**What does a bad number mean?** Low HDL levels can increase risk of heart disease. You can help increase your levels by exercising, quitting smoking, and keeping a healthy weight.

**How often should I get tested?** You can check your HDL by receiving a Lipid Panel. It is recommended for patients with diabetes to receive a Lipid Panel annually.

## LDL

**What is it?** LDL is the “bad” cholesterol, but it is an essential fat that your cells need.

**What is a good number?** For men, LDL levels should be between 40-100 mg/dl, and for women, between 50-150 mg/dl.

**What does a bad number mean?** If LDL levels are too high, it can collect on the walls of arteries and cause blockages and plaque. This can cause heart attacks. Also, as white blood cells try to swallow and digest excess LDL, they convert it into an oxidized form, which is toxic.

**How often should I get tested?** You can check your LDL by receiving a Lipid Panel. It is recommended for patients with diabetes to receive a Lipid Panel annually.

## Blood Pressure

**What is different?** Patients with diabetes are more likely to have high blood pressure. About 2/3 patients with diabetes report having or taking prescription medications to lower their blood pressure. Your risk of heart disease and stroke increase with high blood pressure.

**How can I help/prevent it?** You can help yourself by eating whole grains, reducing sodium intake, losing weight or preventing weight gain, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol consumption. You may also need to ask your doctor if you would benefit from medicine to help lower your blood pressure.