

## Save on Strips!

Home blood glucose testing provides vital information that can help you better manage your diabetes. However, with test strips running close to one dollar per strip, it's crucial to make every test as accurate as possible, and to help make every expensive test strip count! Here are the top five most common testing mistakes, and what you can do to keep from making them!

### **MISTAKE #1:** Blood sample that is too small.

Make sure you know how much blood it takes for your meter to give you an accurate reading. If you have a meter that requires a larger drop of blood than you are able to obtain, talk with your health care professional about getting a meter that requires the least amount of blood.

A sample that is too small can cause inaccurate blood glucose readings. It can also cause a machine error, forcing you to redo the test and waste a test strip.

### **MISTAKE #2:** Falling victim to the elements.

Altitude, room temperature, and humidity can affect your meter readings. Protect your meter from the excessive heat and cold by storing it in a cool, dry place and checking the display for any temperature-related error messages. If an error shows on the screen after you turn on the meter, consult the user manual for how to proceed.

### **MISTAKE #3:** Not washing hands before testing.

It's important to always wash your hands and thoroughly rinse them before getting a blood sample. Food and other residues can cause misleading high meter readings. Even hand lotion or antibacterial sanitizer can affect your results! If you don't have access to soap and water, lick the finger you'll be testing and dry it on a piece of cloth (or your shirt, if you're in a pinch). Avoid using rubbing alcohol, as it dries out the skin and can also provide a false reading if the alcohol ends up mixed in with the blood sample.

### **MISTAKE #4:** Not drying hands before testing.

While it's important to make sure your hands are clean before testing, it's also important to make sure they are dry. Having excess water on your fingertips when testing can dilute the result, causing the reading to be unreliable. Also, wet hands can make the blood droplet difficult to collect, potentially causing you to waste a test strip.

### **MISTAKE #5:** Not using control solution.

(Next)

### **Save on Strips, Continued**

Almost every glucose meter comes with a bottle of “control solution,” which is a bottle of liquid used as a blood sample when running a control test. The control solution is engineered to produce a testing result within a predetermined range, helping you test the accuracy of your blood glucose meter. If the result of a control test is out of range, you’ll know if your meter is giving you skewed results. In this case, you should replace the meter immediately instead of wasting your time, and money, on an inaccurate meter. Call the meter manufacturer and see if they will send you a replacement! 