

## Don't Make This Common Diabetes Mistake!

Diabetes is running rampant in America. Recent statistics show that nearly 24 million people have been diagnosed with this devastating disease, and it's estimated that 5.7 million more have diabetes and don't even know it. But what's even more alarming is that despite all the "practice" physicians have in treating diabetes, an enormous number of myths still abound. The truth is, the advice you receive from your conventional doctor could do far more harm than good. That's why I'm devoting this and the next two *Health Updates* to dispelling the biggest myths surrounding diabetes. The first myth is that people with diabetes should test their blood sugar daily. As I'll explain in a minute, that's not always good advice.

### Getting it right—how often *should* you test your blood sugar?

Let's start at the beginning. If you have type 1 diabetes, or type 2 diabetes that's insulin dependent, you need to test your blood sugar regularly to determine if you need to adjust your insulin dosage. The mistake doctors make is telling *all* their patients with type 2 diabetes—whether they're on insulin or not—to test daily...and in many cases, to test multiple times a day.

Not only is all that incessant testing unnecessary if you're not on insulin, it's debilitating. Think about it. When you test your blood sugar, do you make any changes in your treatment program? Do you use testing to identify foods that drive up blood sugar—and eliminate them from your diet? Does testing alter your medication dosage? If not, what's the sense of it?

Two studies published in the *British Medical Journal* last year came to similar conclusions. They found that self-monitoring of blood sugar levels did not improve glucose control but was associated with higher costs, lower quality of life, and more depression.

### **This one test—taken about four times a year—is all most people need to track blood sugar**

We've treated thousands of patients with type 2 diabetes at the **Whitaker Wellness Institute** over the years, and rather than requiring regular self-testing, we periodically measure their hemoglobin A1C levels.

While a finger stick is a snapshot of your blood sugar at a given time, the A1C test gives a broader picture of average blood sugars over two or three months. This allows us to evaluate how well a patient's treatment program is working and to make adjustments, if necessary.

Our "adjustments" don't include drugs. In fact, we wean virtually all patients off their oral diabetic medications. This is another "diabetes myth," that all patients need drugs to lower their blood sugar. In my next *Health Update* I'll tell you how we get our patients off their diabetes meds, and get their diabetes under control naturally.

**Julian Whitaker, MD**