

BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

SMART LOCAL 36 BENEFIT FUND

DIABETES

Pass This Test!

When it comes to blood glucose levels, your best guess may not be good enough.

Before you read on, stop and guess your blood sugar (glucose) level. Write down the figure. Now test your blood sugar. How did you guess and the results of the actual test compare? If your guess was too low, or too high, you are not alone. A 2005 study of 104 people (published in the *British Journal of General Practice*) found that:

- 60 percent did not guess correctly
- 45 people guessed too low
- 18 guessed too high.

Be sure to use
Control
Solution to
check your
glucometer!

The results of this study help to settle a debate. This is the question. If you have type 2 diabetes, should you test your blood sugar? Here is what the experts at Johns Hopkins say. They talk about why you should test, not guess your blood sugar based on how you feel.

Understand the reasons to test

Guessing your blood sugar level is not safe. This is true even if:

- You have type 2 diabetes
- Your blood sugar only goes up and down in a moderate range

Chicken Joes

¾ lb. ground chicken
1 small onion, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. paprika
Salt & pepper, to taste
1 red pepper, chopped
¾ cup zucchini
14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, drained
½ cup BBQ sauce
4 toasted whole-wheat buns

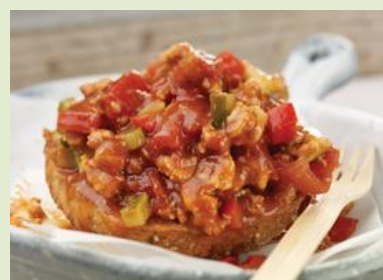
In a large skillet, cook the ground chicken, onion, garlic, chili powder, paprika, salt and pepper over medium heat until meat is browned, about 5-6 minutes.

Add the red pepper and zucchini and cook over low heat for about 5 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Add the diced tomatoes and BBQ sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Serve over half of a toasted bun

Serving Size: Serves 8

Calories per serving 145, Fat 4.5g, Sat Fat 1.2g, Cholesterol 30mg, Sodium 340mg, Total Carbohydrate 17g, Fiber 3g,



- You tend not to have symptoms of high or low blood sugar.

“Most people feel no different whether their blood glucose reading is 95 mg/dL or 195 mg/dL. But there are huge implications for being at the high and low ends of this spectrum,” says endocrinologist Todd Brown.

Your blood sugar affects your risk of having long term problems. When your average blood sugars rise, your risk does too. Here is an example. Let’s take 2 people; one has an average blood sugar of 195 mg/dl, and for the other it is 95 mg/dl. Compared to the one with the lower number, the person with the higher number has a much higher risk of:

- Eye disease
- Kidney disease
- Nerve disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke.

People may have blood sugars that stay low. This may mean that your medicine needs to be adjusted. Testing can help you catch low blood sugar before symptoms kick in. Symptoms include:

- Dizziness

- Confusion
- Sweating
- Hunger

Loss of consciousness. Christine McKinney, M.S. is a diabetes educator. She says that you need to get a correct measure of your blood sugar. It is the only way you can tell if changes you make are working. Changes may be in: what you eat, or your diet; your activity level, or exercise; or your medicine. Through testing, patients can learn to spot the signs and symptoms that may accompany high and low blood glucose levels.” The bottom line? Testing helps people with diabetes get involved in:

- Managing his or her disease
- Getting tuned in to how best to control it.

Tailor testing to individual needs

How often to test depends on two things: whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes; whether you are on insulin or pills. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends:

- If you take insulin, test each day or more often.
- If you do not take insulin, test enough to know if you

are at your target levels; the ADA does not say how often to test.

Your health care provider will tell you how often you should test.

“I may encourage more frequent testing if there are problems with low and high glucose levels, specific concerns about the effects of exercise and diet, or if there has been a recent change in medication,” says McKinney.

It is a good idea to test at certain times. Take a test both before and after you exercise. Take a test 2 hours after any meal that is out of your routine. This might be times such as a party or a wedding reception. Your health care team might tell you to test more often if you are sick. Being sick can affect blood sugar. And, when you are sick, it can get in the way of your eating and how active you are.

