

# HEMOGLOBIN (A1C)

All patients undergoing total joint replacement surgery are required to have their A1C levels checked at preadmissions. The hemoglobin A1c test is an important blood test used to diagnose diabetes or determine how well a patient's diabetes is being controlled. Hemoglobin A1c provides an average of your blood sugar control over a six to twelve week period.

## What is Hemoglobin?

Hemoglobin is a substance within red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body. When diabetes is not controlled (meaning the patient's blood sugar is too high), sugar builds up in your blood and combines with your hemoglobin, becoming "glycated." Therefore, the average amount of sugar in your blood can be determined by measuring a hemoglobin A1c level.

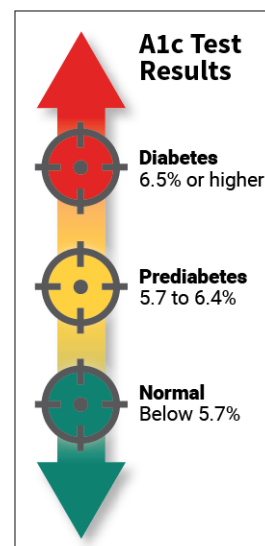
## What is a Normal Hemoglobin A1c Test?

For people without diabetes, the normal range for the hemoglobin A1c is between 4% and 5.6%. Hemoglobin A1c levels between 5.7% and 6.4% indicate increased risk of diabetes, and levels of 6.5% or higher indicate diabetes. Because studies have repeatedly shown that out-of-control diabetes results in complications from the disease, the goal for people with diabetes is a hemoglobin A1c less than 7%. The higher the hemoglobin A1c, the higher the risks of developing complications related to diabetes.

## Risk of Surgery When A1c Levels are High

There is a higher risk of complications of surgery if a patient's blood sugar is high (such as poor wound healing, infection and heart attack). In the interest of patient safety and based on current Flagstaff Medical Center guidelines, patient's surgery will be postponed if their A1c levels are higher than 7.5%. The surgery will be rescheduled once the patient's blood sugars reach the target level of control.

People with diabetes should have this test every three months to determine whether their blood sugars have reached the target level of control. If a patient's A1c test signifies their blood sugar is too high we advise the patient to make an appointment with their primary care physician to make adjustments in their diabetes medications.



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