VALLEYHEALTH

Managing A1C & Diabetes

Understanding A1C and Its Importance

A1C is an important test that helps measure how well diabetes is being managed. It provides an average of your blood sugar levels over the past three months by measuring the amount of sugar attached to red blood cells.

How Often Should You Check A1C?

The frequency of A1C testing depends on your diabetes status:

- **Diabetics:** Every 3 to 6 months, depending on how well blood sugar is controlled.
- **Pre-diabetics:** Every 1 to 3 years, based on risk factors and doctor recommendations.
- **Non-diabetics:** Every 3 years for ages 35 to 70 or those who are obese or overweight**.**

How to Lower Your A1C

Improving your A1C requires consistent lifestyle changes. Here are key steps to help:

1. **Make Smart Dietary Choices**
   - **Reduce Carbohydrates:** Foods like bread, pasta, and sugary drinks turn into sugar in your body and raise A1C levels.
   - **Eat More Whole Foods:** Choose fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.
   - **Watch Portion Sizes:** Overeating, even healthy foods, can lead to blood sugar spikes.
   - **Limit Sweets:** Reduce intake of desserts, candy, and high-sugar snacks.

VALLEYHEALTH

Managing A1C & Diabetes

2. **Exercise Regularly**
   - **Be Active Daily:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days.
   - **Incorporate Strength Training:** Lifting weights or resistance exercises help your body use insulin better.
   - **Stay Consistent:** Even simple activities like walking after meals can lower blood sugar levels.

3. **Stay Hydrated**
   - **Drink Plenty of Water:** Helps flush excess sugar from the bloodstream.
   - **Avoid Sugary Drinks:** Replace soda and fruit juices with water or unsweetened beverages.

4. **Work with Your Healthcare Team**

Managing diabetes is easier with support.
Valley Health offers:

- **Physicians:** Monitor A1C and adjust treatment plans.
- **Clinical Pharmacists:** Help manage medications and make adjustments.
- **Dietitians:** Provide guidance on meal planning and nutrition.
- **Behavioral Health Specialists:** Support mental well-being, which is key in managing a chronic condition.

Managing diabetes is a lifelong journey, but with the right tools and support, you can keep your A1C in a healthy range. Focus on diet, exercise, hydration, and working closely with your healthcare team.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Valley Health today!