

A1c Challenge – Strive for 6.5

Begin to lower your risk of diabetes complications...

It is possible for bad things to happen to people with diabetes due to high A1cs over a sustained period of time. These “bad things” may include loss of vision, amputation, kidney failure, to name a few – but you can reduce your risk by taking better control of your blood sugar. Start now! Team Type 1 *challenges* you to set a goal for yourself for your next A1c – to “strive for 6.5”.

What is the A1c?

The A1c is a laboratory test that indicates the average amount of glucose in the blood over the last few months. Roughly speaking, if your A1c is 6, you’ve been keeping your blood sugar around 135 mg/dL on average. The higher your A1c level is over time, the higher are your chances of developing serious complications from diabetes.

On the positive side:

According to *Dr. Bruce Bode* and the *American College of Endocrinology*, an A1c of 6.5 or below can help to eliminate the long-term complications of diabetes. By taking the A1c Challenge, you can change your habits and begin lowering your A1c in just three weeks.

The A1c Action Plan

1. Set your own goal. Then think about ways to reward yourself for achieving it. Maybe you’d like a movie night with your friends, or something fun to do with your family? Find something you really want and use that to help stay motivated, positive, and in the moment.

Parents: What is something that your child would want, and would make changes to get? A carrot is often just the stimulus needed to get the blood sugars where they need to be. This may be as simple as a night without doing the dishes, or seeing a ballgame with your child. We are not suggesting to bribe your child, rather reward them for their newfound success.

Talk with your physician or diabetes educator before making any drastic changes in your diabetes management. No goal is too high – or too low – as long as your doctor says it’s safe.

Next, tell your family and friends about your goal. Explain why it’s important to you, and they just may help you stick to the plan. If you have friends with diabetes, encourage them to take the A1c Challenge with you. Race to see who can get to 6.5 first. A friendly bet always makes competition more exciting.

Now, let’s get started on the three-week plan.

Week 1

Eliminate bad habits that lead to “Oot”y (“out-of-target” blood sugars. Pick 2 or 3 of these habits, and say bye-bye! These habits might include:

- Snacking when your blood sugar is high.
- Eating without checking your blood sugar.
- Skipping boluses or corrections.

Week 2

Make three changes that will help your control. Such as:

- **Check more often.** Using your FreeStyle Flash 4-5 *more* times per day can help reduce A1cs up to 3 points. (Team Type 1 founders, Phil and Joe, check 12-20 times per day!) Also, thanks to the rapid result from the FreeStyle Flash, that is only an extra 25 seconds per day...A small price to pay for eyesight, for example (Phil's motivation).
- **Make more, smaller corrections.** Try a (smaller) bolus when you're above 150, so that you never get to 200.
- **Eat better and exercise more often.** You will feel better and achieve better sugar levels.
- **Focus on your 14-day average.** Can you lower it 10 points? 20? Shoot for a 14-day average below 130, as this will give you a better overall picture of where your A1C is going.
- **Check 1.5 hours after bolusing.** Testing after you bolus tells you if you took the right amount of insulin and gives you a chance to correct before it's out of range. We are never the same 2 days in a row, so it never hurts to check it twice!

Week 3

Keep practicing! Stick with these practices, and they will become habits. Good habits = good (A1c) results.

Is your A1c already 6.5 or better? What now?

Fantastic! You're in good control. We encourage you to share your story with someone else with diabetes, and help them to get there, too. This new-found control will help to empower you to live a better life, and there is no better feeling than helping a friend to keep their eyesight.

‘Don’t think you can do it?’

It may seem difficult to lower your A1c, but Phil Southerland and Joe Eldridge, the co-founders of Team Type 1, know you can do it! When they first met, **Joe’s A1c was near 11!!** Phil challenged Joe to a competition – every time they met, they’d test their sugar levels, and the guy with the higher reading would pay for dinner.

For months on end, Phil won the bet – Joe always paid for dinner. Finally tired of losing, Joe decided to take the A1c challenge. One month later, he finally beat Phil and enjoyed a free dinner!

To this day, they still compete, but usually they split the dinner bills. Both are committed to controlling their diabetes – testing 12-20 times a day – always wanting to win, and both having better blood sugars because of it. **Now, Joe’s A1C is 5.6!!**

Did the Challenge work for you?

Great, if it worked for you, it will work for your friends. Please share your story, and the steps you took, to empower another person with diabetes to take control!!!

You can do it, and the A1c Challenge can help!!! It starts now, and then, sooner rather than later, YOU WILL *enjoy the rewards.* ?