

Guide to Understanding Your Blood Sugar Patterns

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Please Note: Nothing stated in this guide is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This is for informational purposes only. Always seek advice from your healthcare provider for any specific medical conditions.

1. Recognizing Common Blood Sugar Patterns

Understanding patterns in your blood sugar levels is a powerful tool for making proactive adjustments. Here are some common patterns:

Pattern A: Morning Highs (Dawn Phenomenon)

- **Description:** Blood sugar rises in the early morning hours (typically 3-8 am) due to hormones that increase insulin resistance.
- **Tips to Manage:**
 - Talk to your provider about adjusting basal insulin or nighttime snacks.
 - Avoid late-night high-carb snacks, as they can worsen morning highs.

Pattern B: Post-Meal Spikes

- **Description:** A rise in blood sugar after eating, typically seen about 1-2 hours after a meal.
- **Tips to Manage:**
 - Choose complex carbs and fiber-rich foods to slow down glucose absorption.
 - Discuss meal timing or insulin adjustments with your provider if post-meal spikes are frequent.

Pattern C: Exercise-Induced Lows

- **Description:** Blood sugar may drop after physical activity, particularly if the activity is prolonged or intense.
- **Tips to Manage:**
 - Have a pre-exercise snack if blood sugar is below target.
 - Track patterns to learn how different types of exercise affect your blood sugar and adjust as needed.

2. Interpreting Your CGM Data

Key Metrics

- **Time-in-Range (TIR):** The percentage of time your blood sugar stays within your target range (usually 70-180 mg/dL).
- **Glucose Variability:** Fluctuations in blood sugar levels over a given period. High variability can indicate difficulties in blood sugar control.
- **Trend Arrows:** Indicate the direction your blood sugar is moving, helping with real-time adjustments.

3. Using Your Data for Daily Adjustments

Understanding your blood sugar data is most effective when reviewed regularly and thoughtfully.

Suggested Review Schedule:

- **Every 1-2 Weeks:** Sit down and look over your data for consistent patterns or trends. Identifying these patterns will get easier with practice and can help you feel more comfortable with adjustments.
- **During Life Changes:** Whenever you experience a significant change—such as a shift in work or school schedule, a new diet, changes in physical activity, or increased stress—revisit your data. Taking time to focus on your patterns, even in stressful periods, is a powerful act of self-care that can improve your physical well-being and energy levels.

What Counts as a Pattern?

- **Patterns happen consistently.** For blood sugar events tied to insulin doses, a true pattern means the event occurs with the same cause-and-effect more than 50% of the time.
- **Outliers:** If something happens only 25% of the time or less, it's usually an outlier, unless a specific cause-and-effect relationship can be identified.

4. Sample Log to Track Your Patterns

Date	Time	Blood Sugar (mg/dL)	Activity	Food Intake	Notes on Variability
11/01/24	7:30 am	150	N/A	Overnight fast	Dawn phenomenon spike
11/01/24	1:00 pm	180	N/A	Lunch	Post-meal spike
11/01/24	3:00 pm	120	Light walk	N/A	Post-exercise low

Tip: Track specific events like meals, exercise, or stress to better understand how each impacts your blood sugar.

5. Key Questions to Discuss with Your Healthcare Provider

- How can I adjust my insulin or medication to better manage my patterns?
 - Are there specific times of day when I should focus on different foods or activities?
 - Should I adjust my target blood sugar range for specific activities, like exercise?
 - How can I reduce variability and spend more time within my target range?
 - What should I do if I consistently notice high blood sugars during stressful times?
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6. Additional Tips for Using this Guide Effectively

- **Use this Guide Regularly:** Track patterns over time to notice changes and bring consistent data to your healthcare appointments.
- **Be Specific:** The more detail you track in your notes, the better you can pinpoint cause-and-effect in blood sugar changes.
- **Experiment with Adjustments:** Try adjusting meal timing, portion sizes, or activity based on your CGM readings. See what works best for you and discuss these findings with your provider.

6. Final Notes

Managing blood sugar patterns can be complex, but understanding your unique data patterns will empower you to make informed choices that improve your overall diabetes management. Keep this guide handy, review your logs regularly, and don't hesitate to reach out to your healthcare team with questions.

Remember: You are the expert on your own body, and each piece of data brings you closer to mastering your blood sugar control.

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