
GETTING A BLOOD DROP ONTO A STRIP

Placing a drop of blood on the correct spot on a strip is the most difficult step in using a blood glucose meter for many people with visual impairment. There are two steps involved in ensuring that enough blood

is applied for an accurate blood glucose reading—getting a large enough blood drop, and placing the drop accurately on the strip.

GETTING A LARGE ENOUGH BLOOD DROP

Although most of the newer meters only require a very small drop of blood, many users with visual impairment find that they need to have a larger-than-required drop available to allow for possible smearing of the drop. If you bleed slowly or if you use an older meter that requires a larger drop of blood, you might benefit from working with a diabetes educator or other sighted helper to develop a consistent method for obtaining a large enough blood drop. You may want to try some of the following techniques:

- Use a lancing device with an adjustable depth setting, and set it as deeply as it will go.
- Use wider lancets (21-gauge to 28-gauge) rather than thinner ones (29-gauge to 33-gauge).
- Wash and rinse your hands in warm water, leaving them in the water long enough to warm them.
- Rub your fingers together to increase blood flow.
- Shake the hand to be lanced at your side, “snapping” the hand at the end of the movement (the way people used to shake down a mercury thermometer).
- Before lancing, “milk” the finger to be lanced by squeezing it from the base (where it attaches to the hand) to the tip using the thumb and forefinger of the opposite hand. This will draw lots of blood to the tip of the finger.
- On the joint of the finger behind the tip you plan to lance, apply a clothespin or a rubber band tourniquet. (See “Rubber Band Tourniquet” at right for detailed instructions.) You can then lance the fingertip, and release the rubber band by lifting up the thumb, or take off the clothespin.
- If necessary, after using the rubber band tourniquet you can milk the finger again, using the technique described above.

You and your sighted helper should meet and practice together until you know which combination of techniques works for you. Most people will need to use only two or three of these techniques to consistently obtain a large enough drop of blood. For many people, adjusting the lancing device to a deep setting and using a rubber band tourniquet are enough. But some people bleed slowly enough that they need to use all of these techniques.

