Nobody “likes” checking their blood glucose levels. But given the many benefits of monitoring on a regular basis, it would be foolish not to. So in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the downsides associated with glucose monitoring, here are some helpful hints from our expert team of diabetes educators and experienced patients:

1. **GO FOR THE GOALS**
   Monitoring without goals is like a ship without a rudder, floating aimlessly. Work with your healthcare team to make your goals meaningful, measurable and realistic. They should be related to things you have direct control over – such as when/how often you will check, record and review your glucose levels.

2. **ORGANIZE YOUR INFO**
   Turning data into useful information requires a certain degree of organization. Most brand-name blood glucose meters and CGM systems are downloadable to programs that can generate nice, neat reports. But don’t stop there. Glucose values by themselves may reveal when we are in and out of range, but they don’t reveal why. There is always a context, or story, behind each reading. Keeping track of the factors that affect your glucose levels can help you and your healthcare team to uncover the true sources of out-of-range readings.

   These include:
   - Food intake (carbs in particular)
   - Doses of insulin and other diabetes medications
   - Physical activities (exercise and daily chores)
   - Emotional stresses
   - Illnesses

Logging behaviors and circumstances associated with glucose levels can be helpful in understanding why you may deviate from your usual patterns. It’s fine to use pen and paper for recording this information, but if you prefer a more modern approach, a variety of software programs and smartphone apps can be used.
3. LEARN FROM YOUR DATA

Once you’ve collected a few weeks’ worth of information, it’s time to take a critical look. Your healthcare team can help you to evaluate your data at your appointments, so bring printed reports to your visits or bring ALL of your meters for downloading. You should look at your own information on a regular basis as well. Review the blood glucose values at each phase of the day separately: pre-breakfast, post-breakfast, pre-lunch, etc. If you notice that a number of values are out of your target glucose range, discuss potential solutions with your healthcare team. As noted above, logging the behaviors/circumstances that accompany the glucose values can really help!

4. MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF

Why make blood glucose monitoring any harder than it has to be? For convenience sake, many people like to have an extra meter (or two) so that they don’t have to carry it to/from work, kitchen/bedroom, up/down stairs, etc. To obtain an extra meter, ask your healthcare team for a free sample, or call the number on the back of your meter to request a complimentary backup.