



TAKING CONTROL OF DIABETES WITH CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORING

Contributed by Dr. Keri Ingrassia-Squiers, Hackettstown Medical PCP Affiliate

Being proactive is what being healthy is all about. Now patients with type 2 diabetes can manage their disease with the help of data that demonstrates how lifestyle impacts glycemic levels. By using professional continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), patients can see exactly when sugars spike and either adjust their medication or change the lifestyle choices they make with diet or exercise.

Typically, a diabetic patient is seen quarterly to evaluate both fasting and 90-day trend sugars via the Hb A1c blood marker. Some patients tote their glucose and activity logs to discuss during the visit, but not many are compliant. I usually request that my patients check their sugars before breakfast and dinner three times per week in order to document a trend of their daily sugars. This is also used to determine if fasting sugars remain in control throughout the day or if elevated sugars in the morning trend upward further during the day. With the aid of CGMs, a practitioner can modify therapies to ensure a patient does not fall into dangerous patterns as with nighttime hypoglycemia or lows.

In our office, the professional CGM is a waterproof device about two inches in length that is attached to the skin and monitors the patient blood sugar levels every five minutes for up to six days. The sensor is then removed and data is downloaded to a computer from which interpretations are made. For the duration of the testing period, the patient keeps a dietary food log via paper or for the tech-savvy patient, via use of a mobile app by snapping photos of meals. With many patients, simple dietary adjustments are needed to ensure adequate control. For some, major medication changes are needed either with mealtime coverage or long acting medication.

Through active participation and review of personalized data, professional CGMs have revolutionized the treatment of diabetes. Complications of the disease and thus its cost burden can be reduced

with this reimbursable service. One caution with the non-professional or “over the counter” CGMs is the inaccuracy of values in the lower glucose ranges.

Dr. Ingrassia-Squiers is an attending physician at Hackettstown Medical Center and Morristown Medical Center. She has been in private practice since 2003 in Hackettstown and has owned her practice since 2005. As a member of the Accountable Care Organization of the AHS, her practice repeatedly has scored among the top percentile of the many practitioners in the group. She is also an attending physician at Heath Village and the House of the Good Shepherd geriatric facilities while remaining very active in community service, writing articles and lecturing locally on women's health issues as well as preventive care.



Hackettstown Medical PCP Affiliate
5 Hastings Square Plaza
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

website: www.hackettstownmedical.com



Dr. Keri L. Ingrassia-Squiers D.O.
& Resident of Green Township

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