

Troubleshooting CGMs

What is a CGM?

A Continuous Glucose Monitor is a small wearable device with a sensor under the skin. It measures glucose every few minutes, shows trends, provides alerts, and helps guide decisions about food, activity, and medication.

Why is My CGM Reading Different from a Finger stick?

- CGMs measure tissue fluid, not blood.
- Differences of 10–20% are normal. For example, your fingerstick might read 150 and the CGM might read anywhere from 120 to 180. This is why trends are important.
- Readings lag 10–15 minutes behind blood glucose.
- Differences between CGM and fingerstick readings are common after meals, exercise, rapid glucose changes, new sensors, or dehydration.
- Individuals should do a fingerstick if symptoms don't match your CGM or during rapid changes.

How do I use Trend Arrows & Patterns?

Trend arrows show rising, falling, or steady glucose. Check your CGM:

- When waking and before bed.
- Before meals and 1–2 hours after meals.
- Before/after activity.
- Every few hours when sick or stressed.

Where do I place my sensor?

- Back of the upper arm, abdomen, upper thigh, and lower back, avoiding bony areas.
- Rotate where you place the CGM when you apply a new sensor.
- Avoid scars, moles, stretch marks.
- Apply to clean, dry skin.
- Use covers/over patches if needed to help keep on.
- Avoid placing adhesive directly over sensor opening.

What are Nighttime “Compression Lows”?

- Don't sleep on the sensor side to avoid compressing the sensor while sleeping to avoid false lows. Confirm with a fingerstick if unsure.
- If your sensor falls off early, call the manufacturer for a replacement. Keep your sensor's lot number.



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What do I do if I Experience Connection Issues?

If you are experiencing connection issues:

- Toggle (turning it ON) Bluetooth.
- Restart phone.
- Restart app.
- Keep device within range.

What should I do if I get an Error Messages or “No Readings”?

May occur during warm-up, new sensor stabilizing, pressure on sensor, temporary signal loss. Use a fingerstick if symptoms don't match.

Never hesitate to call your care team if you are uncomfortable with your numbers or not feeling well.

Strategies to improve accuracy.

- Hydrate. Sensor values may be off when you are dehydrated.
- For Dexcom only, calibrate within the first 24 hours.
- Note: Libre devices cannot be calibrated.
- Be vigilant! Remember, if symptoms do not match the number on the sensor, use a blood glucose meter.
- If the sensor and meter continue to report values with a difference of more than 20%, change the sensor and request a replacement.
- Putting a sensor on is relatively easy, but using it effectively requires education. Obtain education from your diabetes care team.

Have a backup plan.

- You should always have a blood glucose meter and non-expired blood glucose test strips on hand as a backup.
- If your symptoms don't match the reading on the sensor, double-check using a blood glucose meter, as is consistent with all manufacturer's instructions.
- Contact your diabetes care team or the manufacturer's customer support team for advice if meter and CGM values differ by more than 20%.
- When using a blood glucose meter, be sure to wash your hands first and use non-expired test strips.



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