

The microalbumin test, which measures how well your kidneys are working, is one of the most important tests in diabetes. Having diabetes means you are at risk for serious kidney problems. It is possible for kidney damage to occur after many years of having high A1C levels (above 7%) or high blood glucose levels. (Occasional high blood glucose levels will not cause diabetes kidney disease.) Having this simple urine test done each year can help catch any problems early on. Proper treatment can stop or slow the problems before they become serious.

**What is the microalbumin test?**

“Microalbumin” refers to small amounts of a protein called “albumin.” A urine test done at your doctor’s office measures the amount of this protein that appears in the urine. If your kidneys become damaged, waste products normally filtered out by the kidneys remain in the blood. Protein that should remain in your blood leaks into the urine, and this is what the test measures.

**How often should microalbumin be checked?**

At least once a year. If your doctor is not checking your microalbumin, be sure to ask why.

**What does the test result mean?**

The goal for the microalbumin test is to have the target number at 30 or lower. If the result is higher, have it rechecked two or three times within the next 3-6 months. There are other reasons besides diabetes that may cause a high reading, such as pregnancy, a urinary tract infection, menstrual bleeding, or excessive exercise. If the reading is 30 –299, it indicates early-stage kidney disease. If the reading is 300 or higher, it means the kidney disease is more advanced.

**What kind of action can I take?**

You can do several things to slow or stop kidney problems, especially if you catch the problems early enough:

- Keep your A1C and blood glucose in target range as much as possible.
- Keep your blood pressure at or below target goal. For most people with diabetes, the goal for blood pressure is less than 130/80.
- Talk to your doctor about taking an ACE inhibitor or an ARB. These are medicines that can keep your microalbumin from rising. They can also help control blood pressure.
- If you smoke or use tobacco products, try to quit.