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Blood sugar monitors: One to a patient, if you want to avoid infection

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are warning healthcare professionals that sharing blood glucose monitoring machines carries the risk of transmitting the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and other infectious diseases. Their simple advice: One monitor per diabetic patient.

In recent years, the number of reported HBV outbreaks linked to blood glucose monitoring has increased, particularly in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, but also in any setting (e.g. clinics, health fairs, schools, camps and senior centers,

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among others) where blood glucose monitoring equipment is shared, or where those performing the monitoring do not follow basic infection control practices.

While stressing that reusable fingerstick lancing devices should never be used for more than one person to avoid the risk of transmitting bloodborne pathogens, the FDA and CDC also maintain that the glucose meters themselves can also pose an infection risk, since it can be difficult to ensure that blood has been completely removed from these devices. They point to a 2005 multicenter survey that indicated that 30% of blood glucose meters used routinely in the surveyed hospitals had detectable blood on their surfaces.

Therefore, the FDA and CDC advise that whenever possible, blood glucose meters should be used for one patient only. Otherwise, meters should be cleaned and disinfected after every use to prevent carry-over of blood and infectious agents. In addition, hands should be washed and gloves changed between patients.

Source: [FDA Patient Safety News](#)

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