

DIABETES

Low Blood Sugar



Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is when the level of sugar in your blood is less than 70. Low blood sugar is usually caused by eating less or later than usual, being more active than usual, or taking too much diabetes medications. Drinking beer, wine or liquor may also cause low blood sugar. Your blood sugar level can get even worse if you do not treat it early.

Low blood sugar may make you feel nervous, shaky or sweaty. You can feel confused, pass out or have a seizure if your sugar continues to drop. If you have signs that your sugar is low, test it right away. If it is less than 70, you need to treat it right away. If you cannot test your blood sugar, but have symptoms of low blood sugar, go ahead and treat it. You should eat 10 to 15 grams of carbohydrates right away.

FOODS OR LIQUIDS TO TREAT LOW BLOOD SUGAR

Each item listed equals 10 to 15 grams of carbohydrates:

Sugar packets	2 to 3 packets
Fruit juice	1/2 cup = 4 ounces
Soda pop (not diet).....	1/2 cup = 4 ounces
Hard candy	3 to 5 pieces
Sugar or honey.....	3 teaspoons
Glucose tablets.....	2 to 3 tablets

Check your blood sugar again in 15 minutes after eating or drinking. Eat another 10 to 15 grams of carbohydrates every 15 minutes until your blood sugar is above 70 or your symptoms have gone away. Eating one of the items on the list will only keep your blood sugar up for about 30 minutes. You should plan to eat a meal within 30 minutes of having a low blood sugar episode.

REMINDERS

- Always keep track of your blood sugar level in your logbook. Write down the numbers and the times when low levels occur.
- Call your health care provider to talk about changing your diet, activity or diabetes medicine if you have low blood sugar a lot.

HOW DO YOU PREVENT LOW BLOOD SUGAR?

Try to stay as close to your usual schedule of eating, activity and medicine as possible. If you are late getting a meal or more active than usual, you may need a snack. Be prepared. Always carry some type of carbohydrate with you so you will be ready at any time to treat low blood sugar. Take your logbook with you when you go to see your doctor.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about diabetes, call 1.800.414.6314 (TTY: 1.800.473.0989).