

HYPOGLYCEMIA – LOW BLOOD SUGAR

When your blood sugar level falls below the normal range, your body doesn't function as well as it should. Most people with diabetes do not feel well when their blood sugar is less than about 70 mg/dL. Symptoms can be physical or emotional, and they can come on very quickly.

Causes:

The most common causes of low blood sugar are:

- Taking too much diabetes medicine
- Eating meals or snacks at the wrong time
- Skipping or not finishing meals or snacks
- Getting more exercise than usual

Symptoms:

Your body will probably tell you when your blood sugar level is too low. You may:

- Feel shaky
- Have a rapid heartbeat
- Become sweaty
- Feel tired
- Have blurred vision or headaches
- Feel hungry
- Feel numbness or tingling in your mouth and lips
- Become crabby or confused
- Pass out

How to treat:

Low blood sugar is usually easy to treat, but you need to know what to do **before** it happens. If you feel like your sugar level may be low, test your blood. If your blood sugar is less than 70 mg/dL (or the level set by your doctor), you need to eat something that contains real sugar right away to raise your blood sugar. Sugar will bring your blood sugar level back up to normal faster than any other foods.

If you feel like your blood sugar is low but you cannot test, eat something that contains sugar. **When in doubt, it's safer to eat the extra food than to risk having a bad low blood sugar reaction.** Some things you can eat to raise your blood sugar fast are:

- 3 glucose tablets
- ½ cup of juice (apple, orange)
- ½ cup of regular soda (not sugar-free)
- 6 or 7 small hard candies (not sugar-free)
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 tablespoon of sugar

Important to do:

Most of the time, people can feel a low blood sugar reaction coming on. But at times, blood sugar can get very low without causing symptoms. Because a low sugar reaction can occur without warning, everyone who takes diabetes medication should carry diabetes identification with them at all times. If you pass out, or cannot talk, this ID will let people know what's wrong and help you get the treatment you need more quickly. It could save your life.