



Treating Low Blood Sugar

After you eat food that contains carbohydrates, your body breaks it down into a sugar called **glucose**. The cells in your body use the sugar to produce the energy they need to function properly. Low blood sugar, called **hypoglycemia**, happens when the glucose, or sugar, in your blood drops below normal levels or below the target range set by your healthcare practitioner.

What Can Cause Hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia may be caused by:

- Taking too much insulin
- Taking too much medication that raises insulin levels
- Not eating enough food
- Waiting too long between meals
- Exercising too much
- Drinking too much alcohol



Your body uses **glucose** to produce the energy it needs to function properly.



Each person's reaction to low blood sugar is different. You need to know your own signs and symptoms.

Common Symptoms of Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar) Include:

- **Feeling shaky or dizzy**
- **Feeling moody or nervous**
- **Sweating**
- **Hunger**
- **Headache**
- **Anxiety**
- **Confusion**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Weakness**



Untreated hypoglycemia may result in a dangerously low level of blood sugar, requiring immediate emergency care.

Managing and Treating Hypoglycemia

Managing and treating hypoglycemia involves checking your blood sugar and getting it back into your target range with some form of high-sugar food or medicine.

Things You Will Need:



- A blood glucose meter, along with its associated materials
- One fast-acting food source containing fifteen to twenty grams of sugar or carbohydrates, such as three or four glucose tablets

If you don't have glucose tablets, you can substitute one of these food sources:



- 4 ounces of juice
- 1 cup of milk
- 4 ounces of regular soda
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 5 small pieces of candy

Steps for Managing and Treating Hypoglycemia



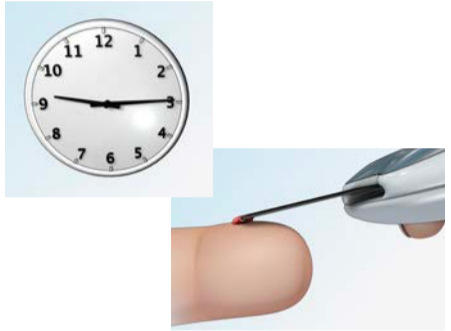
Step 1

Check your blood sugar level using your glucose meter.



Step 2

If your blood sugar is lower than 70 or lower than your target range, eat or drink one fast-acting source of sugar or carbohydrates.



Step 3

Wait 15 minutes, then check your blood sugar again.

Step 4

If your blood sugar is still too low, repeat step 2 and step 3, then check your blood sugar again.



Step 5

After your blood sugar returns to your target range, if you have to wait 30 minutes or more before eating your next meal, eat a snack that contains protein and carbohydrates, such as crackers and peanut butter or half of a ham or turkey sandwich. Otherwise, be sure to follow your normal eating habits or meal plan.



If you have treated your low blood sugar twice and your blood sugar remains below 70, call your healthcare practitioner right away.

Preventing Hypoglycemia

You can help prevent hypoglycemia by:

- Regularly checking your blood sugar
- Following your normal meal plan
- Not skipping meals
- Keeping a source of fast-acting sugar with you at all times
- Taking your diabetes medication as prescribed by your healthcare practitioner
- Exercising regularly
- Carry emergency glucagon medication if prescribed by your healthcare practitioner.



To find out more about treating low blood sugar, talk to your healthcare practitioner.

The information in this handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your healthcare practitioner and should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your healthcare practitioner with health questions and concerns.