



Low Blood Glucose Level (Hypoglycemia)

WHAT IS HYPOGLYCEMIA?

- Hypoglycemia occurs when your blood glucose (also known as blood sugar) level is too low.
- What is too low? Less than 70 mg/dL on your home monitor.
- Hypoglycemia can happen if you take insulin or oral diabetes medications such as glimiperimide (Amaryl), glipizide (Glucotrol), glyburide (Diabeta), nateglinide (Starlix) or rapaglinide (Prandin).
- It generally does not occur if you are not on one of the above medications.

WHAT ARE SOME CAUSES OF HYPOGLYCEMIA?

- Taking too much insulin or medication
- Changing the timing or amount of meals and/or snacks you eat
- Exercising
- Illness such as vomiting or diarrhea

WHAT ARE SOME SYMPTOMS OF HYPOGLYCEMIA?

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Hunger	Confusion	Not being able to respond
Irritability	Paleness	Loss of consciousness (fainting)
Shakiness	Shakiness	
	Convulsions	
	Dizziness	
	Pounding heart	
	Tingling lips	
	Headache	
	Extreme fatigue	

HOW CAN I PREVENT PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH HYPOGLYCEMIA?

- Eat the correct amount of carbs to match your insulin or medications.
- Be careful not to take too much insulin.
- Test your blood glucose level more often during exercise and times of stress.
- Watch how much alcohol you drink. Have only one or two servings of alcohol and always eat carbs when you do.

- Check your blood glucose level at least four times a day when you are sick and as often as every two to four hours.
- Always carry a source of fast-acting sugar with you. (See the section How Can I Treat Mild or Moderate Hypoglycemia for examples.)

HOW CAN I TREAT MILD OR MODERATE HYPOGLYCEMIA?

- Follow the rule of 15. Take 15 grams of carbs such as:
 - 3 or 4 glucose tablets (You can buy these at your pharmacy.)
 - 1 tube of glucose gel (You can buy this at your pharmacy.)
 - ½ cup (4 ounces) of fruit juice
 - ½ cup (4 ounces) of regular soda
 - 1 cup (8 ounces) of skim milk
 - 6 to 8 Life Savers or SweeTARTS
 - 15 Skittles
 - A small piece of fruit
 - 1 tablespoon of honey, jam, sugar or syrup
- After 15 minutes, test your blood glucose level again.
- Take 15 more grams of carbs if your blood glucose level is still lower than 70 mg/dL.
- Once your blood glucose level is back within your normal range, eat a light snack if it will be more than one hour until your next meal.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT OF SEVERE HYPOGLYCEMIA?

- Let your family and friends know that if you ever become unresponsive, lose consciousness or cannot swallow, they should call 911 or inject you with a glucagon injection pen. You need a prescription for this pen. You should carry one if you are at high risk for hypoglycemia. You should become conscious again quickly.
- If you have a seizure or do not become conscious, your friends or family should call 911.



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