



What to do about Low Blood Sugar

Low blood sugar (also called hypoglycemia) can make you have tremor, heart palpitations, dizziness, weakness, and confusion.

When should you worry?

You should worry if your blood sugar is below 70 mg/dl. At this level you should respond by taking in quick sources of carbohydrates, repeating your blood glucose measurement, and avoiding tasks that could be dangerous like driving. A blood sugar lower than 54 mg/dl can affect your thinking. You should let your healthcare provider know if this happens to you. Severe episodes of low blood sugar may need help from another person.



Why does low blood sugar happen?

Low blood sugar most often happens to patients with diabetes. It may occur after delayed or missed meals, unusual amounts of physical activity, or medication errors. Medications called beta blockers can blunt the symptoms of high blood sugar making you less aware it is happening. Patients take beta blockers to prevent heart attacks and lower blood pressure.

Beta Blockers:

<i>Acebutolol</i>	<i>Metoprolol</i>
<i>Atenolol</i>	<i>Nadolol</i>
<i>Bisoprolol</i>	<i>Nebivolol</i>
<i>Propranolol</i>	<i>Carvedilol</i>
<i>Labetalol</i>	

First Aid for Low Blood Sugar

1. Eat or drink 15-20 grams of fast-acting carbohydrates like glucose gel or tablets, fruit juice, regular (not diet) soda, honey, or sugary candy.
2. Most people recover but when in doubt, call 911.
3. Follow with a more substantial food that contains protein, fat, and more complex carbohydrates like a sandwich.
4. Retest after 15 minutes and give more carbohydrate if sugar level is still not over 70 mg/dl.
5. If helping someone with *impaired consciousness* you should give glucagon 3 mg intranasally or 0.5 to 1 mg as a subcutaneous or intramuscular injection and **Call 911!** Patients need more treatment!

Quick sources of sugar to treat low blood sugar:

3 or 4 glucose tablets
½ cup juice or regular soda
Two tablespoons of raisins
4 or 5 saltine crackers
One tablespoon of sugar, honey, or corn syrup
6-8 hard candies



Glucagon Options:



6. Inform your healthcare provider so we can prevent future episodes by changing your blood sugar target or treatment regimen.



Diabetes treatment is not “one size fits all”!

- Not all patients benefit from tighter blood sugar control.
- You can learn to adjust your insulin doses depending on the circumstances.
- The American Diabetic Association recommends yearly diabetic teaching for all diabetics. Our certified diabetes educators can help you implement a flexible insulin regimen or adjust your meal plans and exercise based on glucose patterns.
- There are diabetes medications do not cause hypoglycemia at all. It may be time for a change.
- If you do not have a prescription for glucagon, please ask!
- Close family contacts should learn to recognize low blood sugar and administer glucagon. You can bring them with you to your appointment.



You can reach an on-call provider any time of the day or night for true emergencies. Simply call your provider’s office number and select the option to reach the on-call.

