



Hypoglycemia

Basic facts

Common signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia include:

- **Feeling shaky and/or sweaty.**
- **Nausea.**
- **Extreme hunger.**
- **Heart pounding or racing.**
- **Blurred vision.**
- **Confusion and/or inability to concentrate.**
- **Impaired judgment.**

What is hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia is low blood glucose (less than 60 mg/dL). It occurs most commonly in patients treated with insulin, but can also occur in patients treated with medicines that make the pancreas release more insulin.

What causes hypoglycemia?

Most often, hypoglycemia is the result of a mismatch of food intake, exercise, and medicines to lower blood glucose. If you eat less or later than usual, skip a meal, or have more physical activity than usual, you may have hypoglycemia. If you drink alcohol it can also cause hypoglycemia, especially if you drink on an empty stomach.

What should I do if I think I have hypoglycemia?

- If possible, check your blood glucose to find out if your blood glucose is low.
- If your blood glucose is low or you cannot check your blood glucose, go ahead and treat with 15 grams of carbohydrate. (See “Rule of 15” described on the next page.)
- You should start to feel better in about 10 minutes. If you are not feeling better within 15 minutes, repeat the treatment.
- Do not treat hypoglycemia with high-fat foods such as candy bars, cookies, ice cream, etc. because the fat slows the absorption of the glucose.
- Tell your diabetes provider if you have severe or frequent hypoglycemia.

What about driving?

Hypoglycemia can pose a serious danger to you and others if it occurs while you are driving. Check your blood glucose before driving. If it is under _____mg/dL, have a snack before driving.

“Rule of 15”

1. Check your blood glucose.
2. If your blood glucose level is less than 70 mg/dL, treat with 15 grams of carbohydrate. If your blood glucose is less than 50 mg/dL, treat with 30 grams of carbohydrate.
3. Check blood glucose again in 15 minutes.
4. If still less than 70 mg/dL, repeat the treatment.
5. If your next meal is not within an hour, eat a small snack with protein such as cheese and crackers or a small peanut butter sandwich.

What if my family member has passed out from hypoglycemia?

Call 9-1-1. Do not attempt to give the person anything by mouth. If you have been given a glucagon kit, you may administer it.

What is 15 grams of carbohydrate?

Carbohydrate Source	Amount	Carbohydrate	Calories
Glucose tablets <i>1 tablet = about 5 grams of carbohydrate; check label</i>	3 to 4 tablets	15 grams	60
Juice	½ cup	15 grams	60
Soft drinks, regular	½ can	20 grams	70
Sugar <i>1 teaspoon = 4 grams of carbohydrate</i>	1 tablespoon	15 grams	60
Sport drinks	1 cup	15 grams	60
Milk <i>Nonfat or 1%</i>	1 cup	12 grams	90 (nonfat) 105 (1%)
Lifesavers <i>1 piece = 2.5 grams of carbohydrate</i>	6 pieces	15 grams	60
Sweet Tarts <i>1 piece = 1.7 grams of carbohydrate</i>	8	14 grams	60
Chewy Sweet Tarts <i>1 piece = 0.5 grams of carbohydrate</i>	30	15 grams	60
Skittles <i>1 piece = 0.9 grams of carbohydrate</i>	15	15	60
Fruit Roll-Ups <i>1 roll (½ ounce); check label</i>	1	12 to 15 grams	50 to 75
Raisins	2 tablespoons	15 grams	60

