

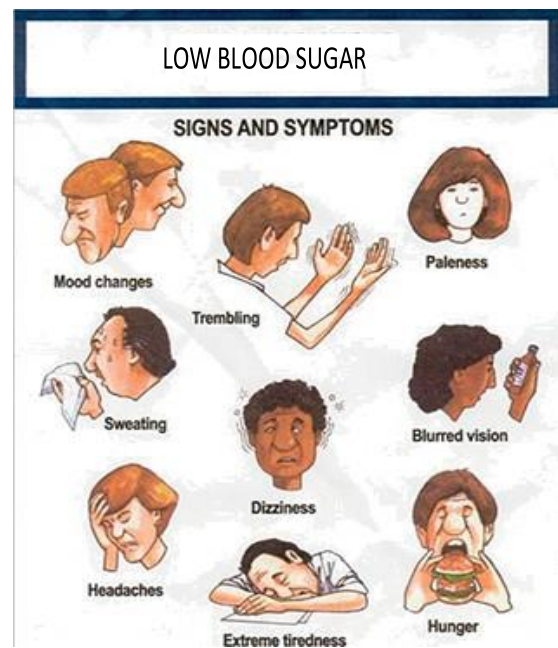
# Diabetes and Low Blood Sugar (Low Blood Glucose) Fact Sheet

Low blood sugar, also known as hypoglycemia, may occur if you are a diabetic. If you are a person caring for someone with diabetes, you should be aware of the signs and symptoms of low blood sugar.

Tip: An individual with type 2 diabetes should always wear ID such as a Medic Alert alerting others of their condition.

## Early stages of low blood sugar

- Becomes shaky
- Sweaty
- May complain of a headache
- Feels hungry
- Complains of dizziness
- Pulse increases
- Becomes irritable and moody
- Complains of numbness around the mouth/lips/tongue
- May have a sense of tingling



## Later stages or untreated low blood sugar

- Slurred speech
- Staggering
- Confusion

- Convulsions
- Becomes unconscious

Individuals may not notice any symptoms right away. You, as a family care partner should be aware of the signs and symptoms of low blood sugar and how to treat it. The changes from the early to later stages of low blood sugar can occur very fast for some individuals that someone else must be prepared to give proper treatment.

If you think you or your family member is experiencing low blood sugar, if possible, test the blood sugar level. A blood glucose level of 70 mg/dl {3.9 mmol/l} or less is considered low blood sugar for individuals taking insulin.

If a person shows signs and symptoms of low blood sugar and cannot test the blood, **always treat the symptoms.**



## **Causes of Low Blood Sugar**

- Too much insulin
- Not enough food (a meal may have been skipped or delayed)
- Extra exercise without an increase in food
- Consumption of alcohol
- An infection in the body

## **Tips on how to prevent low blood sugar:**

- Follow the doctor's orders and take the correct amount and type of insulin
- Never skip or delay mealtime.
- Space your meals 4 to 5 hours apart
- Eat scheduled snacks.

- Test blood sugars on a regular basis. Keep a log of how often you experience low blood sugar and what may have caused it to drop
- Learn to relate low blood sugar and exercise. Understand the peak action of your specific type of insulin and mealtime.
- Always carry a good source of sugar and a nutritious snack with you. The source of sugar can be 5- 7 pieces of hard candy like Lifesavers.

## Quick Treatment for Low Blood Sugar

1. If possible, try to test blood sugar level. If it is below 70 mg/dl (3.9mmol/l) or less eat or drink on these choices.

- 1/2 cup of fruit juice or 1/2 can of regular soda
- 1 Tablespoon of sugar or 4 sugar cubes mixed in water
- 6-7 hard candies like Lifesavers
- Glucose tablets (take 3-4) These are available over the counter.



2. Wait 15 minutes and retest the blood sugar level. If not able to test, if the person is still experiencing the symptoms of low blood sugar, repeat one of the above choices. It is important for the blood sugar to be 70 mg/dl (3.9 mmol/l) or more.

3. When the blood sugar is above 70 mg/dl (3.9mmol/l), it is important to eat something with protein. If the next meal is not for a few hours, eat a snack of cheese and crackers or a small peanut butter sandwich and milk or a meat sandwich,

If a person becomes unconscious and unable to swallow, Glucagon may be necessary to use for severe low blood sugar. Glucagon is a hormone that is

produced by the pancreas. It has the opposite effect of insulin. Glucagon raises the blood sugar levels in the body.

If you know that a person experiences periods of low blood sugar, be prepared and ask your health care professional for a glucagon kit to have on hand. If you are a family care partner, be prepared to know how to use it.

### **How to use a Glucagon Emergency Kit**



- Remove the tops from the Glucagon powder and remove the syringe from container.
- Hold the needle upwards and insert the needle into the bottle as it is upside down.
- Inject the liquid in the syringe into the bottle
- Remove the syringe from the bottle, keeping it sterile.
- With one hand, shake the bottle until the liquid and powder and mix well
- Place the needle into the vial and draw up the mixture and remove the filled syringe
- Inject the contents of syringe into any area you would normally use for insulin injections.



Place your family member on their side, in case of vomiting.

After the injection , you should expect your family member to respond in 10-15 minutes. This is a good time to eat a small snack at this time of cheese and crackers, a small peanut butter sandwich, or a meat sandwich and milk.

Notify your health care provider after using glucagon.