

# Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is any blood sugar below 70. Our goal is for you to have less than 2 low blood sugars in a week during the daytime, never have a low blood sugar while you are asleep and to avoid severe hypoglycemia at all times. Check blood sugars before each meal, at bedtime, before driving a car, and when you feel low blood sugar symptoms.

## Common Causes of Hypoglycemia:

- more insulin than your body needs, relative to other factors
- not enough food or a delayed meal
- more exercise or activity than usual
- drinking alcoholic drinks (low blood sugar will occur several hours later)

## Common Symptoms of Hypoglycemia



Nightmares, sleep walking or talking, restless sleep can be additional signs of hypoglycemia at night. Severe hypoglycemia is defined as low blood sugar symptoms that you cannot treat alone and may result in seizure, unconsciousness and can result in brain damage or death.

**Rule of 15: If blood sugar is less than 70, use the Rule of 15 to treat hypoglycemia.**

### How to Treat Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

1.  Eat/Drink 15 g Carbs
2.  Wait 15 Minutes
3.  Check Blood
4.  Less than 70 mg/dl? Repeat Steps 1-4

Examples of 15g fast-acting carbs: 4oz juice, 4oz regular soda, 4 glucose tabs, fruit pouch, 1 Tbsp. of honey. If eating candy, choose skittles or smarties and avoid chocolate as it takes longer to absorb.

**What to do if you feel low but your blood sugar is not?** Once blood sugar is above 70, eat a small protein snack if your next meal is more than 1 hour away. Examples: cup of milk, cheese and crackers, apple and peanut butter, or a slice of bread with peanut butter.

- Sometimes you may have symptoms and think you are low, but your blood sugar is above 70. *You should not treat it as a low unless you are actually low.* If your blood sugar is not below 70, but you are symptomatic, your blood sugar may be dropping rapidly or you may be much lower than you normally run. Continue to check blood sugar. If it drops below 70, treat using Rule of 15.

## Preventing Hypoglycemia and Safety with Diabetes

- Avoid taking rapid-acting insulin right before going to bed. If you do, you need to recheck blood sugar in 2-3 hours.
- Call the diabetes nurse if: you have more than 2 unexplained blood sugars below 70 in 1 week during the day, or any blood sugars below 70 overnight. Do not wait to call!
- Contact your diabetes doctor if you are having lows that you do not feel or recognize. You may have *hypoglycemia unawareness*, which increases your risk of severe hypoglycemia.
- Always carry 15 grams of fast-acting sugar in case you need to treat a low.
- Make sure you have an un-expired Glucagon, Baqsimi, or GVOKE kit in your diabetes bag.
- Wear some sort of medical identification and have on smartphone.

## Problems with Insulin Absorption

- Rotate your injection sites. Injecting in areas of lipohypertrophy may lead to uneven absorption of insulin and increased variability (highs and lows) in blood sugars.
- Avoid hot showers or baths right after taking insulin; this can cause the insulin to be absorbed too quickly and may cause a low blood sugar.

## Exercise

- Check blood sugars before, during, and after strenuous exercise. If blood sugar is less than **120** before exercise, eat a snack. By checking blood sugars, you'll find out if you need to start your activity at a higher blood sugar and/or how much you need to eat during exercise. Start with 15 grams of carbohydrate for every 30 to 60 minutes of *strenuous* activity/exercise.
- Avoid injecting into sites most involved in exercise because it can cause the insulin to absorb too quickly and can result in a low.

## Drive Safely

- When you drive, check your blood sugar before starting the car. It is unsafe for you and everyone else on the road for you to drive a vehicle without knowing what your blood sugar is. **If blood sugar is less than 90, even if you do not feel low, do not drive until you eat or drink something to raise it.** If you feel low while driving, pull off the road as soon as safely possible and treat the low. Resume driving only after confirming that your blood sugar is above 90.

**For severe hypoglycemia where the individual is unable to swallow or unable to awaken,  
GIVE GLUCAGON, BAQSIMI or GVOKE THEN CALL 911**

