

SAFETY— HYPOGLYCEMIA

Letting your blood sugar get too low (hypoglycemia) is dangerous, and it feels bad, too. While this condition is often called an “insulin reaction,” hypoglycemia isn’t always just a reaction to your insulin shot.

Several things can cause hypoglycemia. Missing a meal, eating less or later than usual, drinking a lot of alcohol, exercising longer or harder than normal, stress, and taking too much of your diabetes medicines can all cause your blood sugar to drop. People taking insulin need to understand the symptoms of hypoglycemia and how to treat it.



When you become hypoglycemic, you need to raise your blood sugar right away. Your healthcare team will tell you how to do that (half a cup of orange juice is one quick treatment to remember).

The goal is to get your blood sugar back up to 70–80 mg/dL. After you've treated the hypoglycemia, wait 15 minutes, then test and treat again if you need to.

Low blood sugar symptoms

- Shakiness, dizziness
- Sweating, pale skin color
- Hunger
- Headache
- Sudden mood change
- Clumsy or jerky movements
- Confusion, hard time paying attention
- Tingling around the mouth

Sometimes low blood sugar occurs without symptoms, so be sure to check your blood sugar regularly.

What to do

- Eat 10–15 grams of **fast-acting sugar** such as:
 - 2–4 pieces of hard candy
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of orange or grape juice (a juice box will work)
 - 5 gumdrops
 - 1 tablespoon of honey
 - 6 oz. of regular (not diet) soda (about half a can)
 - 2 tablespoons of cake icing (the kind that comes in a tube is handy)
- Eat **3–4** glucose tablets or 2 doses of glucose gel plus a few crackers or a slice of bread