

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Hypoglycemia is a blood sugar level less than 4 mmol/L.
Low blood sugar needs to be treated right away.

What are the warning signs of low blood sugar?

You may feel:

- shaky
- hungry
- vision changes
- numb or tingling lips
- sweaty
- nausea
- anxious
- unable to concentrate
- dizzy
- fast heart beat
- drowsy
- irritable
- weak
- headache
- confused

How do I treat low blood sugar?

Remember: "Rule of 15"

1. If your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L or you have signs of low blood sugar, take 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrate right away.

Examples:

- 15 g of glucose in the form of glucose tablets (such as 4 Dex4[®] tablets)
*This is the best choice for raising blood sugar quickly.
- 15 ml (1 tablespoon) or 5 packets of table sugar dissolved in water
- 175 ml (3/4 cup or 6 oz) of juice or regular soft drink
- 6 LifeSavers[®] (1 LifeSaver[®] = 2.5 g carbohydrate)
- 15 ml (1 tablespoon) of honey



2. Wait 15 minutes. Then, check your blood sugar again.

- If your blood sugar is still less than 4 mmol/L repeat Step 1.
- If your blood sugar is above 4 mmol/L and your next planned meal or snack is more than 1 hour away, have a snack with 15 g of carbohydrate and a source of protein.
- Examples: half a sandwich or 6 soda crackers and cheese.

Do not eat food until your blood sugar is above 4 mmol/L. Food may slow down the absorption of the fast-acting carbohydrate and worsen your hypoglycemia.

How can I prevent low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar may be caused by:

- more physical activity than usual
- taking too much medication
- eating less than usual
- drinking alcohol
- missed or delayed meals

Drive safely!

**Diabetes may affect your ability to drive.
Follow these steps to make sure you are driving safely.**

1. Check your blood sugar immediately before driving.
2. Check your blood sugar at least every 4 hours while driving.
 - If you do not usually feel the warning signs of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia unawareness), check your blood sugar every 2 hours when driving.



If your blood sugar is above 5 mmol/L you can drive.



For a blood sugar 4 to 5 mmol/L:

- Have a snack with 15 grams of carbohydrate before you start driving.



For a blood sugar less than 4 mmol/L:

- Treat low blood sugar right away.
- Wait 45 to 60 minutes.
- Check your blood sugar again.
- Do not drive until your blood sugar is above 5 mmol/L.

3. When driving, always have these items within easy reach:
 - your blood glucose meter and testing supplies
 - a source of fast-acting carbohydrate and a snack
4. If you feel any signs of low blood sugar, stop and treat your symptoms right away.

Important: This is not a full list of brands or products. The University Health Network does not recommend one brand over another and is not responsible for any products listed. Please contact each company directly to find out more about their products.

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