

Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Low blood sugar, also known as hypoglycemia, is when your blood sugar level falls low enough that you need to take action to bring your level back up to your target range.

This is usually when your blood sugar is less than **70 mg/dL**. Talk to your provider about your own blood sugar targets, and what level is too low for you.

When can low blood sugar happen?

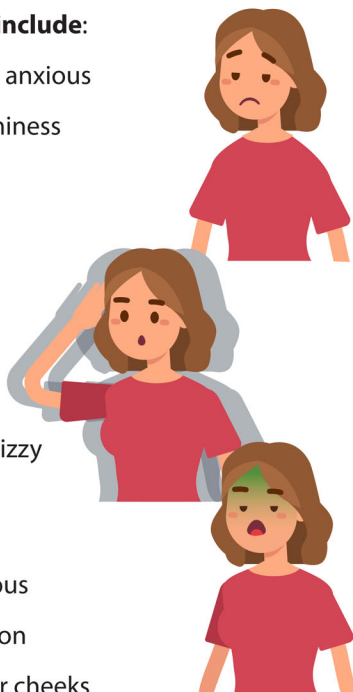
Low blood sugar can happen if you have skipped a meal, eaten less than usual, or been more physically active than usual.

How will I feel if my blood sugar is low?

When your blood sugar is too low, your body reacts by increasing your adrenaline level. Hypoglycemia can feel like an “adrenaline rush” with rapid heart rate, feeling shaky, and having symptoms of anxiety. Each person’s reaction to low blood sugar is different.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Feeling shaky, nervous or anxious
- Sweating, chills, or clamminess
- Mood swings, irritability, or impatience
- Confusion
- Coordination problems or clumsiness
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling light-headed or dizzy
- Feeling sleepy, weak, or having no energy
- Feeling hungry or nauseous
- Blurred or changes in vision
- Tingling in lips, tongue, or cheeks



What should you do?

Follow the Rule of 15.

1. Eat **15 grams** of carbohydrate to raise your blood sugar.
2. Wait **15 minutes** and check your blood sugar again. If your blood sugar remains below 70 mg/dL, repeat these steps.
3. Eat a meal or snack once your blood sugar is back to normal, to make sure it doesn't go lower again.

Examples of 15 grams of carbohydrates include:

- 3 Glucose tablets
- ½ cup of fruit juice or regular soda
- 1 tablespoon of sugar, maple syrup, or honey
- 1 cup of low fat milk
- 7-8 hard candies, such as Lifesavers



What if my low blood sugar is severe?

You may pass out if low blood sugar is not treated. This is a severe event and you need someone to help you immediately. Talk to your family and friends about what to do in this situation.

Do not use the Rule of 15 for someone who is unconscious.

Severe low blood sugar can be treated with glucagon, a hormone that causes the liver to release stored sugar.

Glucagon is available by prescription, and can be injected or sprayed in the nose. Ask your provider about how to obtain a glucagon kit. Check your glucagon regularly to make sure it is not expired.

Call 911. If someone is unconscious and glucagon is not available or someone does not know how to use it, call 911 immediately.

Adapted from: Low Blood Glucose (Hypoglycemia), American Diabetes Association. Available at: <https://professional.diabetes.org/sites>

