American Diabetes Association®

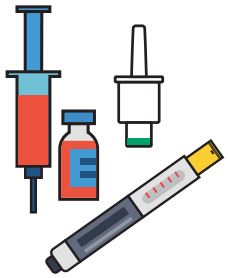
What to Know with a Low

Hypoglycemia is low blood glucose (blood sugar).
Severe hypoglycemia is dangerously low blood glucose.

HAVE A PLAN

Ask your doctor for a prescription for glucagon (available as the preferred ready-to-use or nasal powder) which is a lifesaving medication to treat severe hypoglycemia. Always keep it on hand and check the expiration date regularly (don't use the medication if the expiration date has passed). You may or may not be able to give it to yourself. **Make sure those around you know how to give you glucagon in case you can't—it could save your life!**

Keep your diabetes toolkit up to date with glucose tablets or gel, juice, regular soda, and glucagon.



HYPOGLYCEMIA

Low blood glucose less than 70 mg/dL but greater than or equal to 54 mg/dL.

1. **Check** your blood glucose with a blood glucose meter or continuous glucose monitor (CGM).

2. **Know** the signs and symptoms:

If blood glucose is below 70 mg/dL and/or you are experiencing:

- Hunger
- Sweating, chills, and clamminess
- Feeling shaky, nervous, or anxious
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Confusion

3. **Use** the 15-15 rule:

Consume 15 grams of fast-acting carbs to raise your blood glucose, such as:

- Glucose tabs
- Glucose gel
- ½ cup of juice or regular soda
- One tablespoon of sugar or honey

Wait 15 minutes to check your blood glucose again.

4. **Repeat** step 3 if your blood glucose is still below 70 mg/dL.

If your blood glucose is above 70 mg/dL, or is trending up on your CGM, and if it's NOT at mealtime, have a protein and carbohydrate snack (example: cheese and crackers) to keep your blood glucose from dropping low again before your next meal.

5. **Recognize** when you need more carbs. There are times when eating or drinking to correct your blood glucose is not possible and glucagon needs to be administered.

SEVERE

- ☐ **Check** your blood glucose with a glucose meter or CGM.
- ☐ **Know** the signs and symptoms.

If blood glucose is:

- **Level 1** Blood glucose less than 70 but greater than or equal to 54 mg/dL.
- **LEVEL 2** Blood glucose less than 54 mg/dL.
- **LEVEL 3** Blood glucose is dangerously low, below 54 mg/dL. A severe event characterized by altered mental and/or physical status requiring assistance for treatment of with any blood glucose level.
  - Altered mental state
  - Fainting
  - Losing consciousness
  - Incredibly weak or unable to help yourself
  - Seizure
  - Coma

- ☐ **Administer** glucagon, if you are able, or ensure a caregiver knows where your glucagon is and how to use it.
- ☐ **Call** 911 as soon as glucagon has been injected. If someone else has given you glucagon, they should turn you onto your side if you are unconscious to avoid choking, and call 911.
- ☐ If your blood glucose levels do not return to normal within 15 minutes, administer a second dose of glucagon.*

This is general advice and you should always follow your doctor's guidance and the manufacturer's instructions for how to safely administer glucagon.

*Remember to have your glucagon prescription refilled as soon as possible

Learn more at **diabetes.org** | 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)

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This infographic is based on recommendations from the ADA's *Standards of Care in Diabetes—2026*