

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Glucose)

Fraser Health Diabetes Health Centres

What is hypoglycemia?

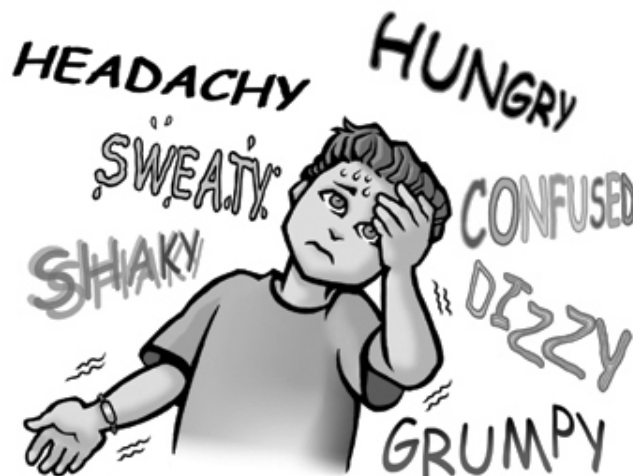
Hypoglycemia is when your blood glucose drops below 4 mmol/L.

Who is at risk for hypoglycemia?

People who take insulin or some types of type 2 diabetes medications (see page 24). Check with your diabetes health care team to see if you need to be concerned about hypoglycemia.

What are the symptoms of hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia can happen quickly and there may be warning symptoms.



Why does hypoglycemia happen?

- not enough food or a late meal
- unusual increase in exercise
- too much insulin or too many diabetes pills
- alcohol without food
- diarrhea or vomiting



Let your doctor know if low blood glucose occurs often, such as 3 times or more per week.

Alcohol may cause hypoglycemia for up to 24 hours after drinking. Always eat a meal or a snack if you are drinking alcohol. Discuss the effects of alcohol with your diabetes health care team.


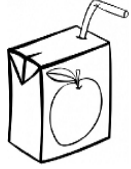


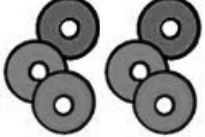
It is very important to treat hypoglycemia quickly!
Carry fast acting carbohydrate and wear diabetes identification!

Treatment of Hypoglycemia

Use the **“Take 15 - Wait 15”** rule to treat hypoglycemia.

Call 911, if you are confused or cannot follow the instructions listed here.

1. Test your blood glucose.
2. If your blood glucose level is less than 4.0 mmol/L or you have symptoms of hypoglycemia and cannot test, you need to take one of the following **15 grams of fast acting carbohydrate**:



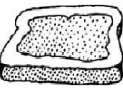
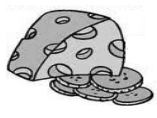
				
15 g of glucose 3-5 tablets (check label) Best Choice	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL) of juice <u>or</u> regular soft drink	3 teaspoons (15 mL) <u>or</u> 3 packets of sugar	1 tablespoon (15 mL) of honey	6 Life Savers®

Note: if you take acarbose (Glucobay®) you must use glucose tablets. If not available then use honey or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (375 mL) milk.

3. Wait 15 minutes
4. Test your blood glucose again.
5. If blood glucose is still less than 4.0 mmol/L, take another 15 grams of fast acting carbohydrate. Wait 15 minutes and test your blood again.
6. If your blood glucose is still less than 4.0 mmol/L on the third test, call 911 or have someone take you to the nearest emergency department.

DO NOT DRIVE IF YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVEL IS LESS THAN 5.0 mmol/L!

7. If your blood glucose level goes back up into your target range, eat your meal. If your meal is longer than 1 hour away, eat a snack that contains 15 grams of carbohydrate and protein such as one of the following:

			
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL) yogurt	1 cup (250 mL) milk	$\frac{1}{2}$ peanut butter sandwich	6 soda crackers and cheese