Patient edition

American Diabetes Association®

Guidelines InSIGHT

A visual guide to the guidelines

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Three levels of hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) are defined by blood glucose (blood sugar) readings and symptom severity.



LEVEL 1

Your blood glucose is below 70 mg/dL and at least 54 mg/dL



LEVEL 2

Your blood glucose is below 54 mg/dL



LEVEL 3

Blood glucose has impaired your ability to think or control your body, so treatment requires help.

What raises your risk of severe hypoglycemia?

- You use certain medicines, including insulin, sulfonylurea, or meglitinide.
  (such as glyburide and glipizide)
- You have previously had low blood glucose
- You do not feel symptoms or recognize low blood glucose signs
- You have advanced kidney disease
- You are an older adult
- You have trouble with memory

Hypoglycemia Symptoms


Hunger


Sweating, chills, and clammy skin


Trembling, nervous or anxious


Rapid heartbeat


Feeling lightheaded or dizzy


Confusion


Loss of consciousness


Seizure


Coma

EVALUATE AND PREVENT HYPOGLYCEMIA

- Keep your diabetes supplies current: glucose tablets or gel, juice, regular soda, candy, and glucagon.
- Monitor your blood glucose as directed, especially when active or if meals and snacks occur outside their usual times.



- If you use insulin or have a high risk of low blood glucose, use a continuous glucose monitor.
- Follow the directions for your medicines, but do not take insulin when blood glucose is low.
- Use the 15-15 Rule to treat low blood glucose at once.
- Be cautious with alcohol: it raises the risk of low blood glucose and may hide some of the symptoms.
- Review your treatment plan with your health care professional when:
  - Your blood glucose is often low
  - Fear of hypoglycemia affects your mental health

HOW TO TREAT HYPOGLYCEMIA

- If severe hypoglycemia is a risk for you, get a prescription for glucagon. It treats severe hypoglycemia when you cannot eat or drink or are unconscious. If you do not have glucagon, ask your health care professional whether it should be part of your care. Here are tips for choosing and using it:
  - **Choose glucagon that is easy to use:** Ready-to-use auto-injectors and nasal glucagon powder can save time.
  - **Teach people around you:** Show family, coworkers, or roommates where glucagon is stored and how to use it. They can give it to you safely with no medical training.



Call 911 without delay. If someone is unconscious and glucagon is unavailable or no one knows how to use it, call 911 immediately.

This infographic follows recommendations in the ADA's *Standards of Care in Diabetes–2025*

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

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