

# Diabetes: Just the Basics

## Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Your blood sugar can go too low if you are taking certain diabetes pills or insulin. A blood sugar reading less than 70 is too low for most people with diabetes. When you feel that your blood sugar may be low, you should check your blood sugar with your meter. However, if you can't check your blood sugar right away, treat yourself as if the blood sugar is low. Low blood sugar can happen very fast.

### Things that make your blood sugar go too low

- Missing a meal or eating later than usual
- Too much diabetes medicine
- More physical activity than usual

### What to do if you have a very low blood sugar

If you have a blood sugar reading below 70, or if you think your blood sugar is low but can't check it, you should treat your blood sugar right away.

Eat 15 grams of carbohydrates. Some examples are:

- 3 glucose tablets
- ½ cup of fruit juice or regular soda (not sugar free)
- 1 cup of low-fat milk
- 5-6 regular life savers (not sugar-free)

### How you may feel when your blood sugar is too low

You may not feel anything when your blood sugar is low, however, common symptoms include feeling:

- Shaky, sweaty, weak
- Irritable, anxious
- Very hungry
- Numbness or tingling around your lips
- Confused or having a sudden mood change

It takes about 15 minutes to start to feel better. Rest for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, if you do not feel better and your blood sugar is still not over 70, treat it again with the same amount of food and rest for another 15 minutes.

Once your blood sugar is back above 70 you will need to have something else to eat. If your next meal is more than 1 hour away, have a snack such as a half-sandwich, a serving of crackers and peanut butter, or crackers and cheese. If your next meal is less than 1 hour away, eat sooner.

### You can prevent low blood sugar

Most low blood sugar reactions happen because of changes in your routine. Try to identify why a low blood sugar has occurred.

- Medicine (The timing of it, the amount you took)
- Food (Did you eat less? Was your meal later than usual?)
- Activity level (Was it more than usual?)

If you had a change, try to make a plan so the same thing won't happen again. If have more than 2 low blood sugars in a week and you don't know why, call your doctor. You may need a change in your medicine.

If you take medicine that can cause low blood sugar (e.g. insulin, sulfonylureas, meglitinides), always have something with you such as lifesavers or glucose tablets to treat a low blood sugar.

### Steps To Better Health

- Eat your meals at regular times
- Call your healthcare provider if you have a lot of low blood sugars
- Have a meal or snack within 1 hour after a low blood sugar