

Hypoglycemia

What to do when your blood glucose is low

What Causes Hypoglycemia?

Medications

- All types of insulin
- Certain diabetes pills, including:
 - Glipizide
 - Glyburide
 - Glimepiride
 - Nateglinide (Starlix®)
 - Repaglinide (Prandin®)

Increased Activity

Activity over and above your usual level may lower your blood glucose. If you are more active than usual, take extra food, around 15 grams of carbohydrate, before starting the activity. Take a larger snack for more activity.

Diet

Eating fewer carbohydrate foods than on your meal plan can result in hypoglycemia. If you take diabetes pills, eat your usual amount of carbohydrate at meals. If you take insulin, make sure your dose matches your carbohydrate intake.

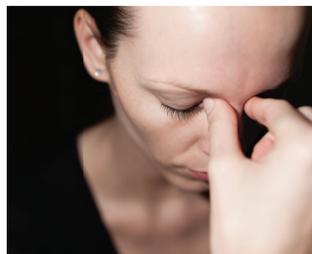
What Does It Feel Like?

At first you may feel:

- Shaky
- Sweaty
- Weak
- Hungry

If not treated, you may feel:

- Irritable
- Confused
- Slurred speech
- Headache
- Tingling
- Loss of consciousness or seizures in severe cases



How to Treat Hypoglycemia

- **Check your blood glucose right away.** If you can't check, treat for low blood glucose anyway.
- **Stop what you are doing and eat 15 grams of carbohydrate.** If no carbohydrate food is available, eat any food. Examples are below.
 - If symptoms continue after 15 minutes, eat another 15 grams of carbohydrate.
 - If your levels are still too low after 30 minutes, call 911.
- **After you have been treated, try to figure out why your blood glucose was so low.** Did you eat your usual meal plan? Were you more active that day? Did you take your usual dose of medication?

Foods with 15 grams of carbohydrate:

- 3–4 blood glucose tablets
- tube of glucose gel
- 3–5 lifesavers or hard candy
- 3 teaspoons of sugar
- 1/2 cup regular soda
- 1/2 cup fruit juice, popsicle
- 1/4 cup sherbet or sorbet
- 1/2 cup ice cream
- 1/2 cup sweetened gelatin

continued on back >

Things to Consider About Hypoglycemia

- Contact your provider via phone or MyVirginiaMason.org if you have three or more episodes of hypoglycemia per week.
- You can have symptoms of hypoglycemia when your blood glucose has been high for some time. Treat using 15 grams of carbohydrate only once. These symptoms will decrease over time as your body gets used to the lower, controlled blood glucose levels.

If a person with diabetes is unconscious:

- Do not put anything in the mouth as the person may choke
- Do not give insulin
- Call 911
- Give injection of glucagon if available (discuss this option with your health care provider)



Plan Ahead BEFORE You Have Low Blood Glucose

- Carry something to treat hypoglycemia at all times.
- Keep something to treat hypoglycemia at your bedside.
- Wear a diabetes identification necklace or bracelet to alert emergency workers if you are in an accident or unable to talk.
- Alcohol can cause low blood glucose. Drink alcohol only with a snack or a meal.
- Whenever you are treated for any medical condition, be sure to mention you have diabetes. Some medicines interfere with blood glucose.
- Food taken for low blood glucose does not count toward your meal plan. It is extra. Do not subtract this from your next meal. Do not take insulin for it.

Contact:

Please speak with your Virginia Mason provider if you have any questions.

VirginiaMason.org/endocrinology